HUMOR BY IAN FRAZIER / WHY AMERICA WANTS TO RUN THE WORLD

The Atlantic Monthly

JUNE 1996

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BY DAVID PLOTKIN, M. D.

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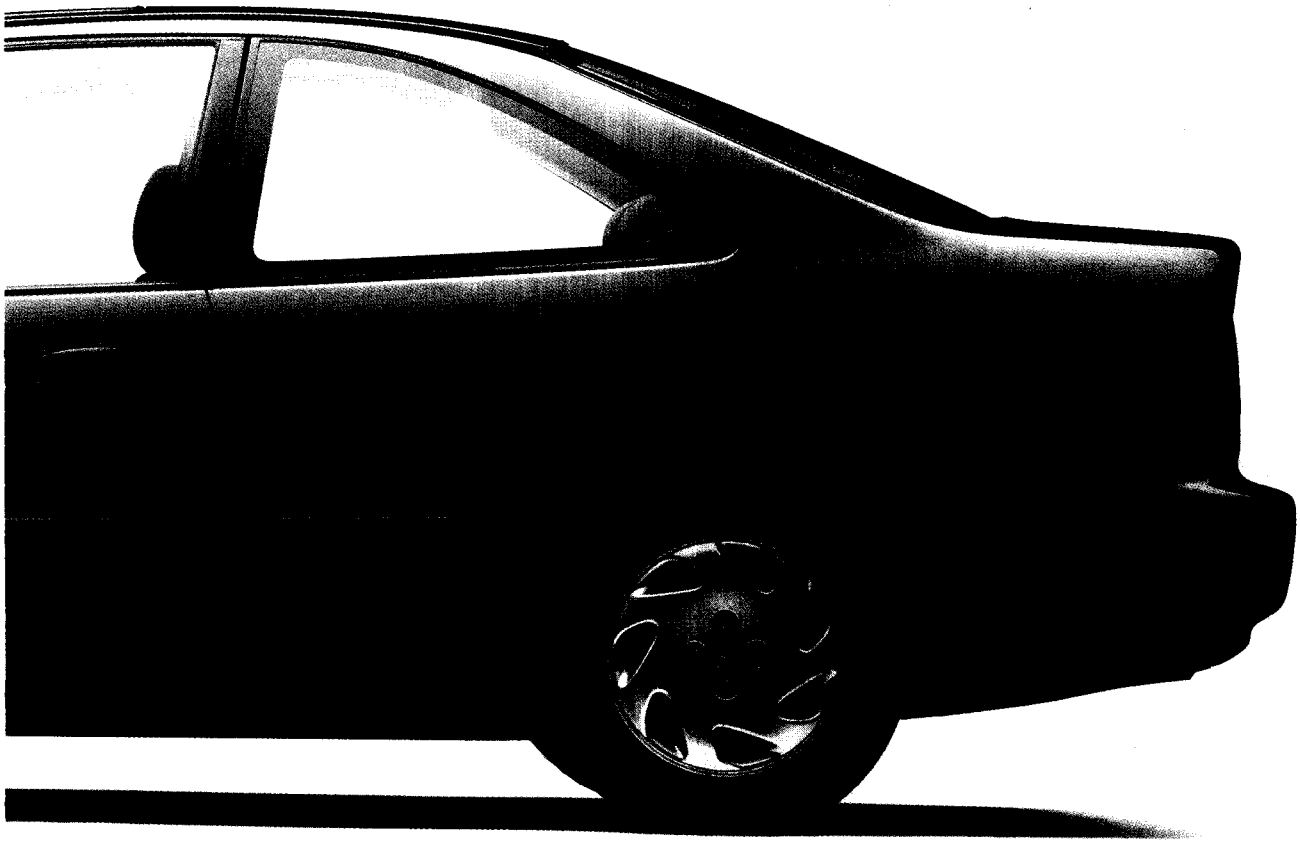

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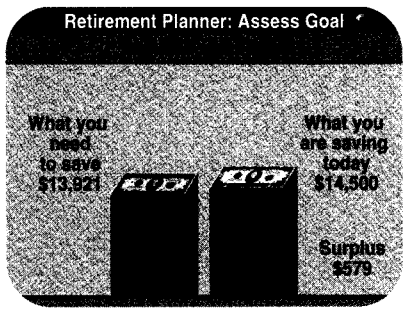

i'm even thinking

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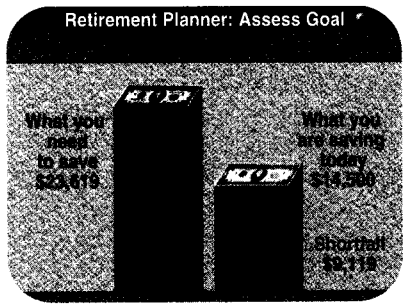

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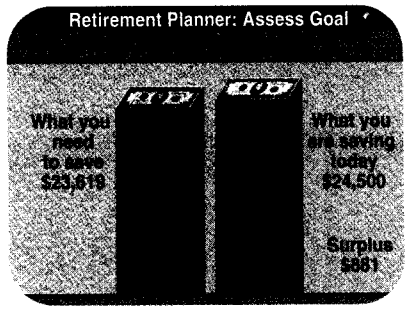

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VOLUME 277 NO. 6
JUNE 1996

The Atlantic Monthly

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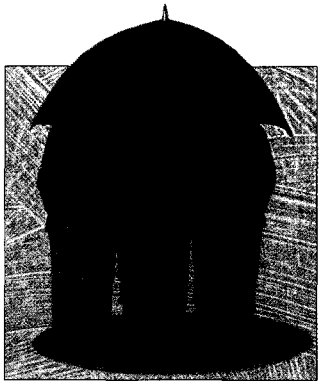

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Cover art by Bina Altera

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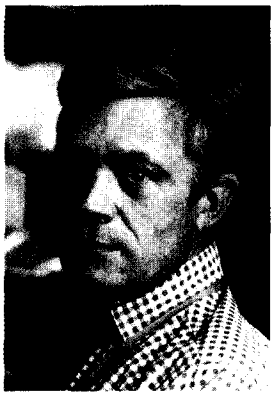
745 BOYLSTON STREET

WHEN Oliver Wendell Holmes proposed that this magazine be called *The Atlantic Monthly*, the conceit was that the magazine, like the ocean, would carry trade between the Old World and the New. In a statement that appeared in the first issue of the magazine, the publishers declared, "While native writers will receive the most solid encouragement, and will be mainly relied upon to fill the pages of *The Atlantic*, [the editors] will not hesitate to draw from the foreign forces at their command."



The foreign forces are exemplified in this issue by the worldly and well-traveled historian-journalist Geoffrey Wheatcroft, who in "The Paradoxical Case of Tony Blair" reports on the resurgence of Britain's Labour Party. Wheatcroft, fifty, who has written for the magazine on subjects as diverse as Margaret Thatcher and Salman Rushdie, the Republic of Ireland and the island of Antigua, has been affiliated over the years with some of England's best-known publications. In the late 1970s he was a columnist for *The Spectator*, and also its literary editor. In the following years he was first the editor of the "Londoner's Diary" in the *Evening Standard* and then that newspaper's opera critic. He is currently a columnist for the *Daily Express*. In the interstices of regular employment he has written many freelance articles and published two books—*The Randlords* (1985), a study of South African mining magnates, and *Absent Friends* (1989), a collection of biographical sketches. A new book, *The Controversy of Zion*, about the history of Zionism, will be published this fall by Addison-Wesley.

Wheatcroft covered Tony Blair, the young, astute, sometimes-hard-to-pin-down leader of Britain's Labour Party, when Blair first stood for office, in 1982. How does covering British politics differ from covering American politics? "In America government is more open. In England society is more intimate—journalists and ministers are more likely to see each other informally at lunch clubs or at parties. I remember Dwight Macdonald's saying how astonished he was when he first lived in London that politicians and newspapermen and union leaders and writers all went to the same parties. That doesn't mean the politicians are any more likely to tell you the truth, of course." For all that, the political resonances are audible. As Wheatcroft says, "Blair has clearly got Clinton in mind the whole time—as an example and also as a warning." —THE EDITORS

CONTRIBUTORS

Bina Altera (cover art) is an illustrator whose work has appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *Boston Magazine*, and *The Boston Globe*. Her work was recently recognized by The Visual Club, an art forum in New York City. Altera is an owner and the curator of The Smoking Gallery, in Boston, which is committed to presenting the work of unconventional young artists.

David Barber ("A Visionary Poet at Ninety") is the assistant poetry editor of *The Atlantic*. His first book of poems, *The Spirit Level* (1995), won the Terrence Des Pres prize for poetry.

Robert Campbell ("Eads to Glinka") is the architecture critic for *The Boston Globe* and a co-author, with Peter Vanderwarker, of *Cityscapes of Boston: An American City Through Time* (1992). He received the 1996 Pulitzer Prize for criticism.

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Geoffrey Wheatcroft ("The Paradoxical Case of Tony Blair") is a columnist for the *Daily Express* of London.

Stephen Wrage ("Watering to Endanger") is a specialist in international affairs. His articles have appeared in *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, *The International Herald Tribune*, and *The Washington Post*.

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LETTERS

A New Public Philosophy

In "America's Search for a New Public Philosophy" (March *Atlantic*), Michael J. Sandel makes the argument that Democrats and Republicans both have "an impoverished vision of citizenship" and that the country cannot articulate a public philosophy that deals with civic virtue. Sandel is right in his assessment of the "national 'funk,'" and he points out that both conservatives and liberals subscribe to a Rawlsian version of neutral liberalism which is at the root of the problem. But Sandel overlooks contemporary alternatives that are being generated at the grassroots level—for example, the New Party—to counter the "threat to self-government" that both big business and the federal government pose to the republic.

The New Party, which includes the likes of Noam Chomsky and Cornel West, has won several local elections in Milwaukee, Chicago, and even Missoula, Montana, and has worked with unions and community organizations in St. Paul and Milwaukee to pass "living-wage" legislation to increase the minimum wage paid to employees of firms that receive public money. Truly the heir of the old Progressive movement, the party supports full employment, democratization of the banking system, fair (rather than free) trade agreements, and a reduction in military spending, among other things. The New Party is a localized phenomenon of regular people doing their civic duty—on a small scale. Its philosophy is one of civic involvement rather than the special-interest, individualistic philosophy of the Democrats.

D. Shawn Pruitt
Indianapolis, Ind.

Michael J. Sandel did a good job of explaining how political philosophy in the United States has evolved over time in response to economic and technological change. He also presents an interesting way of classifying the political arguments that resonate throughout our national history by introducing the concepts of civic republicanism and liberal freedom. Sandel is balanced in his portrayal of the virtues and vices inherent in each system. In the end, though, he favors civic republicanism, at least at the local level, as being the bedrock on which the survival of democracy ultimately depends. I would agree.

But Sandel does not correctly identify the most potent group interested in restoring civic republicanism to the United States today. In fact, he goes so far as to single these people out for slanderous depictions uncharacteristic of his otherwise reasonable article. I am referring to the Christian conservatives, whom Sandel chooses to condemn as "undesirable" and "intolerant." The agenda of these groups—for example, to outlaw abortion, reintroduce prayer in public schools, and return homosexuality to the closet—is really nothing more than an attempt to restore standard American civic culture. As recently as 1960 all these civic norms were the uncontroversial law of the land and enjoyed wide support from citizens of all ethnic and religious backgrounds along with politicians across the spectrum. If this is not civic republicanism, what is?

Erik Peterson
Gresham, Oreg.

Michael J. Sandel has brilliantly diagnosed the problem, but his remedy—even bigger global government—flies in the face of reason. If big government and big business are the problem, bigger international government would only add to it.

Sandel writes that Thomas Jefferson worried, with good cause, that "large-scale manufacturing would create a propertyless class, lacking the independence that republican citizenship requires." Louis D. Brandeis's remedy of

When The Going Gets Tough, The Tough Get Comfortable.

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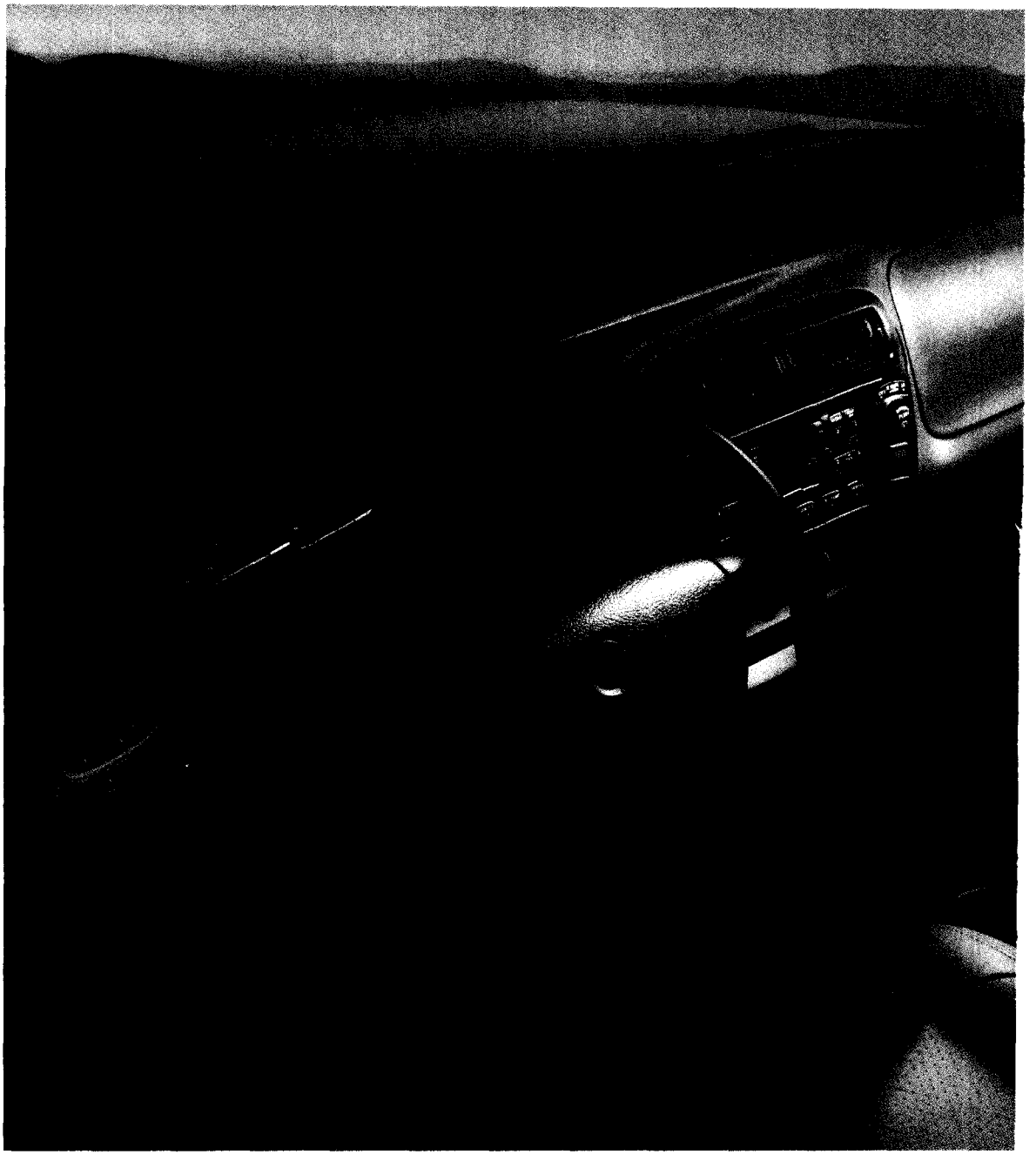

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bigger government to control bigger corporations did nothing to address Jefferson's concerns. Instead it ratcheted up the race to greater bigness by both. Brandeis's and Sandel's remedies would leave the individual feeling smaller and less empowered.

Aristotle was correct in asserting that, in Sandel's words, "self-government [is] an activity rooted in a particular place, carried out by citizens loyal to that place and the way of life it embodies." The challenge of our times is to apply Aristotle's principle to contemporary society.

Bratimir Ilic
Chicago, Ill.

"America's Search for a New Public Philosophy" is, in my opinion, a shot straight to the heart of the problem. I would presume to add just one thought about the principle involved. The members of a complex modern society are simply not free to "choose their own values and ends." Their presence within that society implies a commitment to surrender to the "values and ends" of the majority of their fellow citizens.

The concept of a "New Federalism" was launched by Richard Nixon, not Ronald Reagan. I can speak with some assurance on this, because I was on the Office of Management and Budget team that prepared a report for the President, delivered (fatefully) in May of 1974. The term was rumored to have been suggested to President Nixon by William Safire, then a White House speechwriter. What distinguished the Nixon–Roy Ash version from those that followed was the idea of devolving taxing authority to the states along with responsibility for decentralized program management. The Reagan staff transformed this theoretically workable plan into a "dump" of social programs whose objective was clearly to see them wither on the vine.

Kelly Campbell
Cooperstown, N.Y.

Second Amendment

In her article "Second Thoughts on the Second Amendment" (March *Atlantic*), Wendy Kaminer characterizes the Supreme Court's decision in *Presser* v. *Illinois* (1886) as being based on "now discredited" reasoning. As her article notes, that case held that a state-law prohibition of private militias did not violate the Second Amendment, because that amendment was a limitation on federal, not state, power. However, her characterization of its reasoning leaves the unfortunate impression that today the Second Amendment limits a state's power to control firearms to the same (uncertain) extent that it limits the power of the federal government to control them. This is emphatically not the case. Although some of the reasoning of *Presser* may not have stood the test of time, its conclusion that the Second Amendment does not apply to the states has been followed by every court to consider the matter.

Before enactment of the Fourteenth Amendment, in 1868, it was settled constitutional doctrine that none of the first eight amendments were limitations on state power, only on federal power (*Barron* v. *Baltimore*, 32 U.S. 243 [1833]). Since ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, however, the Supreme Court has gradually come to hold that most of the rights expressed in the first eight amendments do limit state power—not by their own force but because they are part and parcel of the "liberty" protected by the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee that no state shall deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. However, the Supreme Court has never held that the right to bear arms is one of the liberties guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. Unless it does, *Barron* v. *Baltimore* and *Presser* v. *Illinois* must be taken to defeat any argument that the states may not constitutionally control firearms.

Lower federal courts and state courts that have addressed the question have uniformly upheld the power of the states to control firearms. When petitions have been submitted to the Supreme Court to review these decisions, they have always been denied.

Thomas F. Rutherford
St. Augustine, Fla.

Wendy Kaminer misrepresents the views of Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership. First, "gun control" does not cause genocides: murderous politicians and government bureaucrats plan and carry out genocides. In the

twentieth century, enforcement of gun-control laws is a necessary pre-condition for genocide. Rwanda, where as many as 800,000 people were murdered between April 7, 1994, and the end of June, 1994, enacted a "gun-control" law on November 21, 1964. This law explains what is otherwise inexplicable: how so many were murdered so fast by so few.

Second, Kaminer also does not understand the central role that gun control played in the Nazi genocide against six million Jews and seven million gentiles. The Nazis inherited lists of all German firearms owners when they took power in 1933. These lists were compiled under a 1928 law enacted by the center-right Weimar Republic government. Insecure after winning election with only 44 percent of the vote, the Nazis quickly seized firearms from those they did not trust.

Those inherited "gun-control" lists enabled the Nazis to get an iron grip on Germany quickly. They then replaced most major laws, but they did not replace the inherited gun-control law until March of 1938. By then two thirds of Germany's Jews had fled, leaving only 200,000. In the wake of the Kristallnacht the Nazis forbade Jews to own any weapons. This Nazi law appears to be the basis for the U.S. Gun Control Act of 1968.

Jay Edward Simkin
Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership
Milwaukee, Wis.

Wendy Kaminer replies:

Jay Simkin's letter demonstrates that I did not misrepresent his views when I cited him for the proposition that gun control causes genocide. He states that enforcement of gun-control laws is a "necessary precondition for genocide," that gun control explains recent mass murders in Rwanda, and that firearms seizures "enabled" the Nazis to consolidate their hold on Germany. In an article published in *Guns and Ammo*, Simkin has characterized genocide as the "downside" of gun control, citing seven major genocides of this century that have been preceded by gun-control laws; he concludes that "gun-control laws are the key to genocide. . . .To prevent further genocides, we must destroy gun control." He complains that since 1945 "the link between gun control and genocide has gone unrecognized."

It is disingenuous of Simkin to deny that he has tried to persuade his readers that a causal relationship (or "link") exists between gun control and genocide. Perhaps he has never used the exact words "gun control causes genocide," but that is what he leads people to believe.

I am only a little less baffled by Thomas Rutherford's complaint. He suggests that I have misled readers by pointing out (correctly) that the view of the Bill of Rights as a limitation on federal but not state power has long been discredited. As Rutherford notes, in a series of landmark cases decided during this century the Supreme Court has made clear that the fundamental rights guaranteed by the first ten amendments to the Constitution are "incorporated" into the Fourteenth Amendment and govern the individual's relationship with both state and federal governments. The Court has not ruled that the right to bear arms is guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment simply because it has not made an underlying ruling about the Second Amendment. If the Court ever decides that the Second Amendment provides a fundamental individual right to bear arms, that right will no doubt be incorporated into the Fourteenth Amendment as well.

Irving Berlin

David Schiff's tribute to Irving Berlin as a master lyricist as well as composer ("For Everyman, by Everyman," March *Atlantic*) is squarely on target. Unfortunately, two of the "ragged rhyme" examples Schiff uses are actually revised lyrics dating from decades later than the composition of the original songs. As such, they are less an example of Berlin's ability to wed words and music perfectly than they are of a companion skill: wedging new words into a previously composed melody.

"I sit alone/With a table and a chair," from "All By Myself," probably dates from the 1950s; the original, 1921 lines are "I sit alone/In my cozy Morris chair." Here one can see clearly Berlin's instinct for the construction of singable poetry—the assonances (*o* and *s/z*) and alliterations (*m* and *s*, the latter continu-

ing with "so" and "solitaire" in the next two lines). In addition, the juxtaposition of "cozy" with, in the next line, "unhappy" sets up the overall sense and tension of the song. "Table" damages all of this; it is hard to believe that Berlin (rather than Irving Berlin, Inc.) was responsible for the updating.

On the other hand, the "Rockefeller" lyric for "Puttin' on the Ritz," although it also dates from the 1950s, is ingenious, but not as fluent as the original "Harlem" lyric written in 1928 for Harry Richman. The revision is an early example of political correctitude (probably made for Ella Fitzgerald's *Irving Berlin Songbook*) rather than—as in "All By Myself"—reflecting the simple necessity of removing an obsolete reference. The "Rockefeller" lyric also seems to violate the meaning of "putting on the ritz," which Berlin understood well. The phrase connotes pretension, and the Rockefellers had no need to put on the ritz—they *were* the ritz!

Maxwell E. Siegel
Sussex, N.J.

David Schiff replies:

I don't know if Maxwell E. Siegel is a musicologist—but he should be. His comments open a whole new perspective on popular song. It would be fascinating to trace the ways in which songs written for the fleeting present become "timeless." As Mr. Siegel's letter indicates, it often is a question not just of the quality of the song but of the suppression and emendation of dated elements. I doubt that anyone could update "rotogravure" in "Easter Parade," however, even if few people today know what it means. I would hope, though, that it is not necessary to label all changes in racial sensitivity "political correctitude."

Child Labor

Whether by inadvertence or by design, positioning Stephen Carter's "The Insufficiency of Honesty" immediately before Jonathan Silvers's "Child Labor in Pakistan" (February *Atlantic*) was poignant beyond expression. To Carter, "Integrity . . . requires three steps: discerning what is right and what is wrong; acting on what you have discerned, even at personal cost; and saying openly that you are acting on your understanding of right and wrong."

The dimensions of the tragedy in Pakistan are greater than imagined. Thanks for bringing this to our attention. But how should we respond? Corrective action can be achieved only through individual action, not through government and specifically not through U.S. government coercion or involvement. Reflexively, the idea of foreign aid—or, worse, more foreign aid—is offered as the solution. But time after time it has been demonstrated that foreign aid rarely if ever benefits the people of foreign countries; on the contrary, foreign aid acts as an independent financing source for loathsome foreign governments as an entity apart from their people, enabling them to perpetuate tyranny upon their people. In short, foreign aid permits these governments to remain unaccountable to their people. In Pakistan it's the combination of an oppressive regime coupled with do-nothing-ness. Laws protecting children are in place; they are simply ignored.

It is well beyond time that all foreign aid ended—and time for more Americans to act with *individual* integrity. Not buying articles made by enslaved children is a certain step in the right direction.

Paul F. Galvin
Dedham, Mass.

Western consumers' response to child servitude in the carpet industry is evidenced by a significant decline in imports. Pakistani carpet exports suffered a sharp fall from June to December of 1995. Revenues were $48.5 million, down from $97.1 million a year earlier.

Pakistani carpet manufacturers have cause for concern. Their industry is likely to hit even harder times, given their denial of a child-labor problem and their failure to establish Rugmark, a South Asian initiative to end child servitude in the carpet industry. To date, Rugmark Foundations have been established in India and Nepal.

Establishing Rugmark goes a long way toward assuaging the concerns of consumers about child labor. Manufacturers who do not use child labor and agree to unannounced, independent inspections of their looms are certified to use the Rugmark label on their carpets. The label assures consumers, retailers,

[illegible]
[illegible] canned
[illegible] peach slices (16 oz.)
[illegible] extra light syrup*
[illegible] Worchestershire sauce
[illegible] tbsp peach preserves
[illegible] tsp Dijon-style mustard
[illegible] tsp blk pepper
[illegible] boneless center cut pork chops, 3/8-inch thick

[illegible] substitute with fresh peaches [illegible] 1/2 cup apple or orange juice.

Stir first four ingredients together in bowl. Set aside. Heat nonstick skillet over medium-high heat; brush chops with vegetable oil and season with pepper. Brown on one side (2-3 minutes), turn. Add peach mixture, reduce heat to low, cover and cook 4 minutes. Serve with peaches and sauce. Garnish with fresh raspberries. Serves 4.

Since the dawn of time, pork and fruit have been pairing up. And not just apples. Try pineapples. Or plums or berries or lemons or limes. It's only natural. So why resist? For recipes, send a self-addressed, stamped, business-size envelope to: Recipes Ad, Box 10383, Des Moines, IA 50306. Or visit our website at http://www.nppc.org/

IF FRUIT WAS THE FIRST TEMPTATION,

PORK

WAS PROBABLY THE SECOND.

Approximate nutrient information per serving: [illegible] ies: 261, Protein: 24 gm., Fat: 7 gm., Cholesterol: 70 mg., Sodium: 194 mg. Nutrient analysis done by The Food P[illegible] ssor II Diet Analysis Software. Pork Data from the USDA Handbook 8-10 (1991). America's Pork Producers © 1996 Na[illegible] l Pork Producers Council in cooperation with the National Pork Board.

TASTE WHAT'S NEXT.

pork

The Other White Meat.

and importers that the hand-knotted carpet was made by adults, not children.

South Asian child-advocacy and human-rights groups have made strong appeals to U.S. consumers to refuse to buy hand-knotted carpets unless they bear the Rugmark label. Consumer rejection of carpets not carrying the Rugmark label will spur more manufacturers to commit to production without children and spur more countries to adopt Rugmark. For more information about the U.S. Rugmark Campaign, call the National Consumers League, in Washington, D.C., at 202-835-3323.

Darlene S. Adkins
National Consumers League
Washington, D.C.

Jonathan Silvers tries to convey the impression that Pakistan is an exception to the emerging global trend against child labor and that the government of Pakistan is responsible for allowing this problem to "assume epidemic proportions." Child labor does prevail in Pakistan, but it is a problem in many countries of southern Asia and, indeed, many other underdeveloped countries.

Since assuming office in October of 1993, the government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has taken several steps to eliminate bonded labor and to eradicate the abuse of child labor in Pakistan. These include the strict implementation of the Bonded Labor (Abolition) Act of 1992 and other relevant laws, and arrest and prosecution of the culprits; the initiation of a national survey of child labor in collaboration with the International Labor Organization (ILO); the launching of a nationwide rehabilitation program for working children; and the setting up of inspection teams to visit industrial sites and factories regularly to monitor working conditions and to prevent any abuse of child labor or use of bonded labor.

Contrary to Silvers's claims, whenever its attention has been drawn to any instance of bonded labor, the Bhutto government has acted to suppress it. For instance, when Shakil Pathan, of the Independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, pointed out the existence of a bonded-labor camp in District Tharparkar in Sindh, the provincial government immediately busted the gang of criminals involved and secured the release of the laborers.

To discourage the use of child labor in manufacturing carpets exported by Pakistan, the government has established the Rugmark Foundation with the help of the ILO and other United Nations agencies. Under this arrangement all rugs exported from Pakistan must carry this certification. It must also be clarified that cases of child labor do not generally exist in the formal manufacturing sectors—an important point that Silvers omitted. The small enterprises of the informal sector that resort to child-labor practices generally hide them from law-enforcement agencies because of the restrictive conditions prohibiting the employment of minors.

The death of Iqbal Masih, the crusader against child labor, was very sad and unfortunate. According to an investigation conducted by the law-enforcement authorities and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, the murder was unrelated to Iqbal Masih's labor activism and did not involve the "carpet mafia" alluded to by Ehsan Ulla Khan, as Silvers insinuates.

Silvers's description of Islamabad as bristling with "world-class industries" "staffed . . . by children and adolescents" is inaccurate: there are no industries in Islamabad or its immediate vicinity, much less any that are employing "ragged youths entering and exiting the brick factories, steel mills, and stone-crushing plants at all hours of the day and night."

Rifaat Hussain
Embassy of Pakistan
Washington, D.C.

Jonathan Silvers replies:

However admirable the Rugmark Foundation's intentions, some industry critics suggest that it lacks a reliable monitoring system and cannot ensure that members (whose looms are scattered across an area of 100,000 square miles) are in fact complying with the child-free requirement. (I suspect that many are not.) Worse yet, the Rugmark label, although a trademark, is easily counterfeited. In Pakistan, at a carpet warehouse outside Islamabad, I watched a ten-year-old boy sew fake Rugmark tags onto carpets destined for export to Germany.

Essan Ulla Khan, the founder of the Bonded Labor Liberation Front of Pakistan, remains an exile. He is collaborating with a BLLF office in Sweden and, despite exhaustion and homesickness, frequently campaigns throughout Europe for the abolition of child labor in South Asia. Readers who wish to contribute to BLLF's legal and educational programs are advised to send an international check or money order to Bonded Labor Liberation Front–Sweden, c/o B-M Klang Västergatan 19, 531 52 Lidköping, Sweden (telephone 011-46-510-297-95). Readers who wish to learn more about international efforts to eradicate child labor should contact Anti-Slavery International, The Stableyard, Broomgrove Road, London, England SW9 9TL (telephone 011-44-171-924-9555 or fax 011-44-171-738-4110).

Rifaat Hussain's letter represents the most extensive communication I've had to date from a Pakistani official on the subject of child labor. In the weeks I spent in Pakistan, my repeated requests for interviews with Benazir Bhutto, government ministers, and bonded-labor specialists were denied, as were my requests to observe so-called antislavery personnel in action. When I persisted in my requests and asked for a child-welfare agent to accompany me to a carpet factory where twenty children lived and worked (all between the ages of five and eleven), the National Assembly press office in Islamabad threatened to revoke my visa and arrest me for illegal entry.

Pakistan's response to the child-labor crisis is a study in half measures. In the early 1990s the National Assembly passed two landmark bills prohibiting child and bonded labor, but it failed to make any provision for their enforcement. The rehabilitation program and field-inspection teams that Dr. Hussain mentions exist only on the drawing board; they are no closer to reality than they were when they were first proposed, in 1990. It is true that last year the national police raided several factories that used bonded labor; but state prosecutors refused to charge the factory owners—or, for that matter, to close the factories. As for Iqbal Masih's murder, a number of prominent human-rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Anti-Slavery International, believe that the investigation of it was compromised by incompetence and malfeasance on the part of police investigators.

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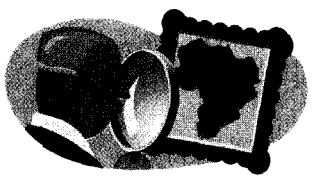
THE JUNE ALMANAC

Food

The price of imported pasta is likely to rise this month, as the U.S. Commerce Department designates and enacts final tariffs on Italian and Turkish pasta. The action comes in response to complaints from domestic manufacturers, who allege that much of the dry pasta imported from Italy and Turkey is subsidized by the governments of those countries and "dumped," or sold below cost, in the United States. The foreign share of the market for pasta has been rising in recent years: in 1994 Italian and Turkish imports accounted for 13 percent of the pasta sold in the United States, up from 9 percent two years before. Some domestic manufacturers have found that the cost of their raw materials alone exceeds the price of the cheapest imported pasta.

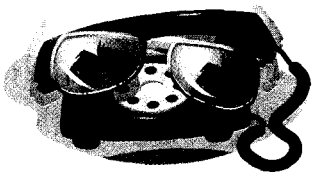
Arts & Letters

Conventional ideas about African art will come under scrutiny this month, as New York's Guggenheim Museum hosts the first exhibition ever to survey the art of all of Africa. *Africa: The Art of a Continent* will run from June **7** to September 29. It will consist of more than 500 items, including sculpture, murals, ceramics, jewelry, and textiles, organized into seven geographically based sections. The exhibit originated last year at the Royal Academy of Arts, in London, where it was hailed as a watershed in the Western treatment of African art but also prompted debate about whether objects designed by African craftsmen for practical use should be considered art or simply handicraft. Curators at the Guggenheim expect that the exhibit will spark discussion about wider issues of African culture and identity; it will be accompanied by showings of African photographs and films at the museum and by citywide symposia on the continent's art, history, and culture.



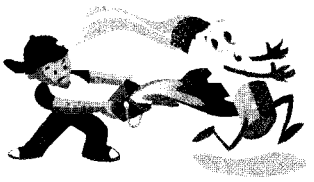
The Skies

June **1**, Full Moon, also known this month as the Rose, Strawberry, or Flower Moon, or, among the Lakota Sioux, the Moon of Making Fat. **4**, the waning Moon lies just north of Jupiter, which shines brilliantly in the evening sky all month. **20**, at 10:24 P.M. EDT the Summer Solstice occurs. Daylight hours are at a maximum, and summer begins. **30**, the second Full Moon of the month —hence a Blue Moon.



Government

June **1**, today caller ID—a telephone service that displays the number of the party calling—comes to California, the last state to make it available. Telephone companies had withheld the service from California while lobbying the Federal Communications Commission to reduce privacy protections demanded by the state's Public Utilities Commission. Their efforts met with some success: as in all other states, unlisted numbers will be protected from display only if customers file a request or dial a blocking code before each call. Nearly half of all residential telephone numbers in California—the highest proportion in the country—are unlisted.



Health & Safety

June **1**, the largest private organization ever aimed at reducing smoking among children opens its doors today in Washington, D.C. The National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids will serve as an umbrella for more than 90 groups that seek to curb smoking among juveniles. Among other things, it will work for passage of rules recently proposed by the Food and Drug Administration to sharply restrict the marketing and sale of tobacco products to the young. The FDA rules would require retailers to verify that cigarette buyers are at least 18 years old; limit sales to face-to-face contact (eliminating vending machines, for example); ban outdoor advertising within 1,000 feet of schools and playgrounds; restrict the outdoor advertising that remains to black and white, text only; and prohibit the distribution by tobacco companies of promotional items such as caps and T-shirts. Every day some 3,000 children start smoking; it is estimated that a third of them will eventually die of tobacco-related illnesses.

Q&A

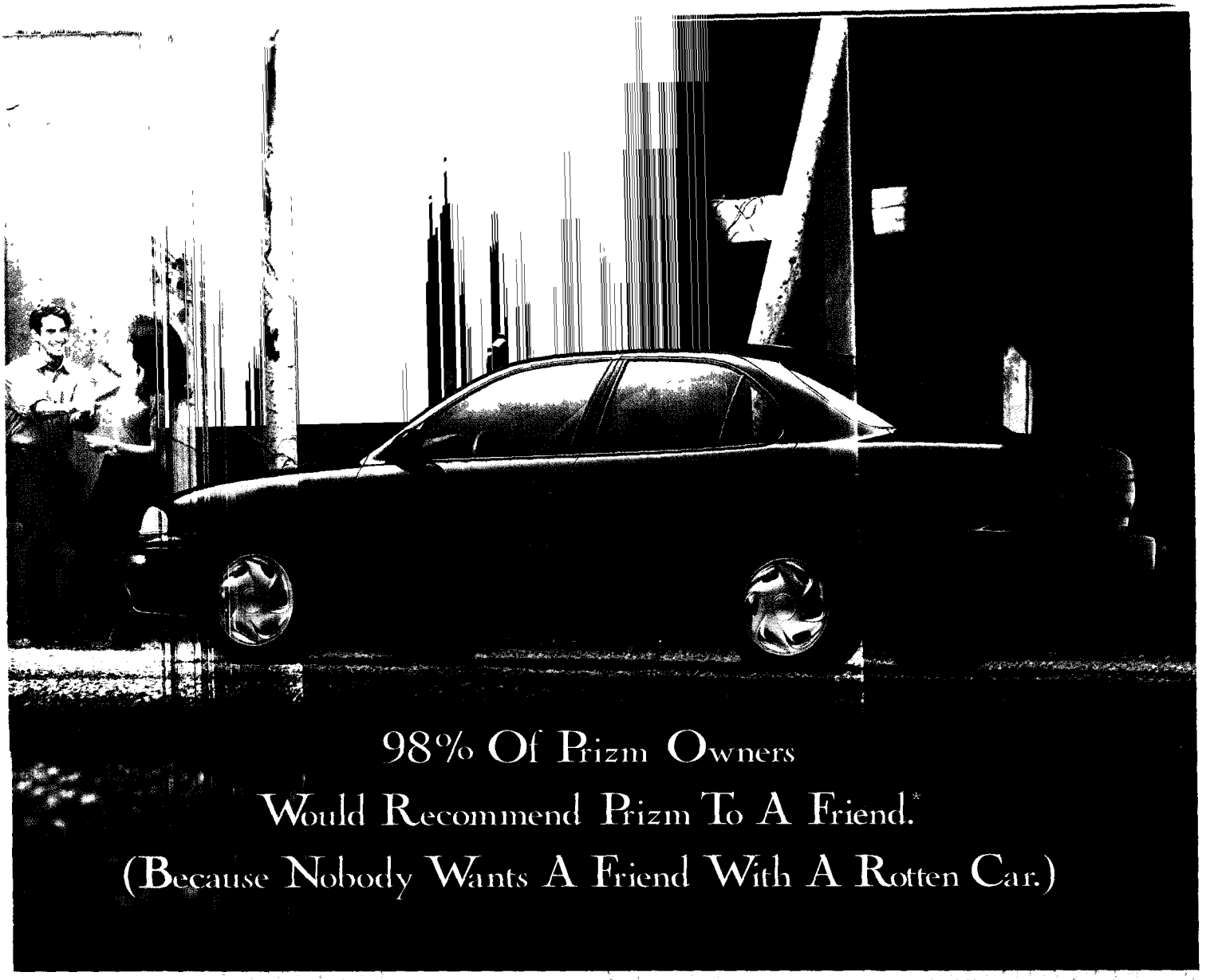
Why does it hurt when aluminum foil touches a filling?

Whenever two different metals are separated by a conducting liquid—such as saliva—voltage is created. Because a filling is grounded in a tooth, the current flows into the tooth, stimulating the nerve. The more dissimilar the metals in terms of electrical activity, the more pronounced the effect: those with gold fillings will feel more pain in this situation than those with silver-based fillings, because silver is closer to aluminum than gold is. If the mouth were completely dry, there would be no conducting liquid, and this painful reaction would not occur. The phenomenon of an electrical current stimulating a nerve was first demonstrated (though not fully understood) by the eighteenth-century physician Luigi Galvani, who made frogs twitch by using brass hooks to connect them to an iron railing.

75 Years Ago

Bertrand Russell, writing in the June, 1921, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "The aesthetic indictment of industrialism is perhaps the least serious. A much more serious feature is the way in which it forces men, women, and children to live a life against instinct, unnatural, unspontaneous, artificial. Where industry is thoroughly developed, men are deprived of the sight of green fields and the smell of earth after rain; they are cooped together in irksome proximity, surrounded by noise and dirt, compelled to spend many hours a day performing some utterly uninteresting and monotonous mechanical task. Women are, for the most part, obliged to work in factories, and to leave to others the care of their children. The children themselves, if they are preserved from work in the factories, are kept at work in school, with an intensity that is especially damaging to the best brains. The result of this life against instinct is that industrial populations tend to be listless and trivial, in constant search of excitement, delighted by a murder, and still more delighted by a war."

Illustrations by Dave Joly



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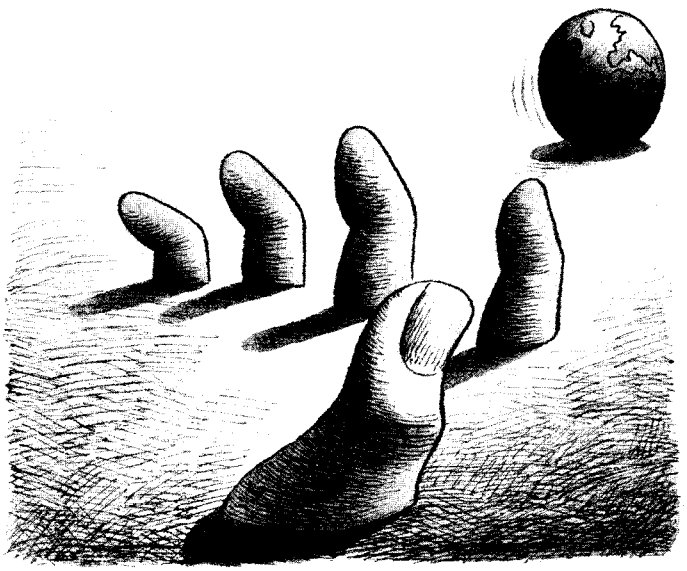
The Year of Talking Radically

"People who should have been indicted got honorary degrees"

—KEVIN PHILLIPS, ON THE CLIMATE OF THE 1980S



CAPITALISM has been coming in for some scarifying criticism lately. Since the first of the year National Public Radio has broadcast a thoughtful series on the causes and human costs of corporate downsizing. *The New York Times* has run a seven-part series on America under the big knife of downsizing. *Newsweek*, on its cover, has called executives who specialize in layoffs "Corporate Killers." Calling the stock market "un-American," Pat Buchanan has injected the issue of "corporate butchers," disposable workers, and the downsized American dream into Republican politics. Picking up on the ideas of Labor Secretary Robert Reich, congressional Democrats have introduced legislation to give tax breaks to companies that treat their employees decently. On college campuses, meanwhile, students are signing up to be union organizers. The new president of the AFL-CIO, John Sweeney, promises to make downsizing an issue in collective bargaining and to expand the union's organizing work, reaching out to janitors, hospital attendants, and "pink-collar" workers, mostly women, who are employed in the service industries of the information economy. An effort is even being made to organize southern poultry workers, off whose limb-threatening labor we grow thin.

by Jack Beatty

"Economic insecurity," "Wall Street greed," "throw-away workers"—the air is full of the language of radicalism. In the 1890s, as many commentators have noted, mass movements of Americans used these very words about "the money power." A century ago the local economies of small-town America were being overridden by the irresistible imperatives of the first truly national economy. Agricultural America was dying; industrial America was being born.

The radicalism of the 1890s failed; the full protections demanded by Populists and, later, Progressives against the community-destroying effects of the nationalized corporate-driven economy would not come for decades. Some, notably universal health insurance, have not yet come. It took the legitimacy crisis of finance capitalism brought on by the great crash of 1929—the dangers of unchecked speculation became a national catastrophe—along with the collapse of the corporate system itself in the Depression for Americans battered by national economic forces to get, finally, a New Deal.

Must Americans battered by the even vaster and more impersonal forces of deregulated financial markets—in part driven, cannibalistically, by employee pension funds—and the new global economy wait as long? Must the real economy, with its real workers and real families and real communities, yield inexorably to every electronic burp of the financial economy? Must 80 percent of Americans accept flat or falling wages while the top one percent continue to amass more wealth than the bottom 90 percent? Will only one side of Henry Demarest Lloyd's 1894 classic *Wealth Against Commonwealth* have the upper hand for the next thirty years?

In a comparison of those nineties to ours, the cardinal difference is one of vision. The Populists, and their Progressive and Socialist and New Deal successors, had a coherent response to the national economy. We grope for a matching response to the world economy. Yet discontent is growing. For the first time since the New Deal, ordinary Americans are asking what the economy is for and why they must submit to the transnational lottery of the market and why self-rule must stop at the economy's edge. A new debate is quickening. It is not over justice or equality. It is over something much more American—the meaning and content of freedom.

Illustration by Christophe Vorlet

THE BOMBAY SAPPHIRE MARTINI. AS SCULPTED BY ROBERT LEE MORRIS.

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The Paradoxical Case of Tony Blair

"You have to remember," says someone who knows him, "that the great passion in his life is his hatred of the Labour Party"

by Geoffrey Wheatcroft

ON October 3 of last year the world awaited the verdict from a Los Angeles courtroom. That Tuesday was also the opening day of the Labour Party's annual conference at Brighton, and at 6:00 P.M.—10:00 A.M. Pacific Time, when the jury's decision was due—many of us covering the conference headed for televisions in bars or hotel rooms. To our astonishment, the BBC led off its news program not with the O. J. Simpson verdict but with the keynote speech that Tony Blair, the Labour leader, had given earlier that day.

Surprise turned into a mixture of irritation and amusement when the full story emerged. The television companies had been badgered by faxes from Alastair Campbell, Blair's press secretary: "Whilst I fully understand there is much interest in the verdict, I would implore you not to lose sight of the news value and of the importance to the country of Mr Blair's speech." Nor did they lose sight of it. The BBC did as it was told. This went beyond spin-doctoring. It was news management worthy of a none-too-democratic Balkan state, or of some Third World country rejoicing in the "new information order."

The arrogance would have seemed outrageous coming from the Prime Minister's office. But Blair was not Prime Minister, only behaving as if he were, after little more than a year—though a triumphant year—as leader of the opposition. When he became party leader, Labour had been out of office for more than fifteen years; an entire generation

Illustration by Glynis Sweeny

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has grown up knowing only Tory rule. Labour has lost four general elections in succession, a record unprecedented since well before the advent of universal suffrage. It managed to lose the last election, in 1992, to what looked like an enfeebled Tory government in the depths of a recession. Since 1974, when Harold Wilson last won a general election for Labour, the party has had five leaders, none of whom has won a general election and four of whom have never been Prime Minister. A British citizen now needs to be over forty to have voted for a Labour government.

This pattern of failure has seemingly been reversed. Blair became the Labour leader in July of 1994, at the age of forty-one, projecting glamour, youth, freshness. His slogan was "modernization," and he unofficially but definitely renamed his party "New Labour." It may have looked more like a marketing strategy than a political philosophy, but it worked. Within a year Labour was so far ahead in the polls that if (in the political commentators' illusory hypothesis) an election had been held then, the Tories would have suffered the kind of wipeout their Canadian counterparts experienced not long ago.

Almost more startling than what Blair did was how he did it. He took over a party all but terminally demoralized by endless defeat, presenting himself as the man who could make the party electable once more. What wasn't clear at first was that he meant to do so by utterly transforming the party, by uprooting its traditions, by effectively destroying Labour as it had been known since its beginnings. There had long been struggles between the left and the right of the party, between advanced socialists and cautious reformists, and some leaders were more radical than others. But Labour had always had a sentimental tradition to which all paid homage, embodied in totems such as the state-socialist Clause Four of its old constitution and the singing of "The Red Flag" at the end of conferences.

Blair is the first Labour leader who barely pretends to be a socialist. He determined to ditch Clause Four, and duly did so. In the process he caused what one writer has called "the collapse of Labour as the party of organised labor"—an outcome that, as the oddly oxymoronic phrase suggests, is as though the Pope caused the collapse of the Church as the medium of organized Christianity. Even more brazenly, Blair has courted figures ranking high in the demonology of the British left, from the rulers of the East Asian "tiger" countries to the Prince of Darkness himself, Rupert Murdoch.

Above all, he did what no leader of the "progressive" side in British politics had done since the 1840s. Every Tory leader since Sir Robert Peel had implicitly agreed with his opponents that the future belonged with their side; that at best a rearguard action could be fought; that conservatism's role was to make concessions as slowly, and with as good grace, as possible. That is, until Margaret Thatcher. She was the first Tory leader who did not share this belief.

And Blair agrees with her. He is the first of the Tories' political opponents ever to concede that *they* have largely won the argument. An anthology of Blair's recent reflections speaks for itself.

"I believe Margaret Thatcher's emphasis on enterprise was right."

"A strong society should not be confused with a strong state."

"Duty is the cornerstone of a decent society."

"Britain needs more successful people who can become rich by success through the money they earn."

"People don't want an overbearing state."

Any of these could have been uttered by a Tory, or by a none-too-liberal Democrat or, indeed, by a none-too-liberal Republican. Come to think of it, Patrick Buchanan's main disagreement with the Labour leader would be over Blair's uncritical admiration for "wealth creators" and free trade. It has been a breathtaking achievement—but a paradoxical one. Political parties have changed character before now, and have sometimes been taken over from the outside. This is a unique and much stranger case: a party has been captured from the inside, and by a man who in his heart despises most of that party's traditions and cherished beliefs.

As parties go, Labour is quite young, much younger than the Tories and than both the Democrats and the Republicans. Its birth isn't easy to pin down. An Independent Labour Party (independent of the parties then existing, that is) was born in 1893, shortly after Keir Hardie became the first man to be elected to Parliament specifically as a labor representative rather than as a "lib-lab" loosely attached to the Liberal Party. But the ILP remained one of many small bodies in the larger and looser movement. A Labour Representation Committee was created in 1900, and formally christened the national Labour Party in 1906.

In those early years any number of different and sometimes conflicting forces jostled within this movement. Marxism had struck its roots in England through the Social Democratic Federation, but not deep or widespread ones. The *Fabian Essays*, published in 1889 by seven writers, including George Bernard Shaw and Sidney Webb, offered an alternative version of nonrevolutionary bureaucratic socialism. Three radical American writers, Henry George, Edward Bellamy, and Laurence Gronlund, had perhaps as much influence in England as in their own country, but ethical and utopian writers such as John Ruskin and William Morris were more influential still.

With all that, Labour remained what its name said: the political and industrial voice of the organized working class. Bodies like the ILP and the SDF were socialist but tiny; the labor or union movement was large but not socialist. Labour organized unions on the one hand, and on the other increased political representation for the masses as the franchise was gradually extended to them. In 1906, twenty-nine Labour MPs were elected, almost all of them workingmen by origin. And their policy remained what Keir Hardie had set out in 1903: "When acting in the House of Commons, they should be neither socialists, Liberals, nor Tories, but a Labour party."

That party waxed as the middle-class Liberals waned, and by the 1920s Labour had become the chief party opposed to the Tories (whose own survival and adaptability over 150 years has been one of the most extraordinary stories of modern European politics). Not until around the time Great Britain finally granted universal franchise did a Labour government come to power. There were two Labour governments before the war, in 1924 and 1929–1931, but neither had a clear majority in Parliament, and both ended in grief, with re-

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criminations and accusations of betrayal.

By the time it became a party of government, Labour had also formally become a socialist party. At its 1918 conference it adopted a new constitution, including the famous Clause Four, which laid down the party's objective:

> To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service.

The sentence was drafted by Webb, a man who personified the dominant ethos of the Labour Party, which was Fabian managerialism. With his imperious, terrifying wife, Beatrice, he believed that the world could be put to rights by the efficient collection and application of statistics. The two of them were lampooned by H. G. Wells in his novel *The New Machiavelli*, though a couple who could spend their honeymoon attending the Trades Union Congress in Glasgow were in reality beyond satire.

Blair took over a party demoralized by endless defeat, presenting himself as the man who could make the party electable.

Like others on the left early in the century, Webb was fascinated by eugenics, or scientific breeding. In the 1930s he became fascinated by another socialist experiment, and with Beatrice wrote the adulatory *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation*, which has been described by one historian as "despite severe competition, the most preposterous book ever written about Soviet Russia." Webb summed up his political philosophy: "The perfect and fitting development of each individual is not necessarily the utmost and highest cultivation of his own personality, but the filling, in the best possible way, of his humble function in the great social machine."

When Labour finally came to power with a clear parliamentary majority, in 1945, it acted on Webb's program and in his spirit. The 1945 government was the apotheosis of bureaucratic socialism, founded on the principles of collectivism, central economic planning, and redistributive taxation. It created—or, more accurately, completed—the modern British welfare state, whose core was the National Health Service and universal benefits, and it also nationalized the "commanding heights" of the economy—or at least some of those heights, as they were then seen. But the timing was wrong, and the old industries that were nationalized, such as railroads and coal mines, though deeply rooted in the emotional memory of the Labour movement, were already in decline and soon to be a burden on the nation.

Mid-century saw Labour's high tide. In the 1951 election the party received more votes than ever before or ever since, and more votes than the Tories. But owing to the vagaries of the electoral system the Tories won the election, and remained in office for thirteen years. And in the forty-five years since 1951 Labour has managed to interrupt Tory rule for only two brief periods: 1964–1970 and 1974–1979. After Labour's defeat in 1992 some of us began to believe that a secular historical tide was sweeping the party away forever, as the Liberals were swept away before. We were wrong, it seems. For most of 1995 and 1996 Labour has enjoyed a huge lead in the polls, around 30 percent at last count. A general election must come by next spring and may well come sooner, as the Major government's slender parliamentary majority evaporates. It is almost universally assumed that Labour will win it, and many Tory politicians are already making discreet plans for alternate careers. So reports of the death of Labour were much exaggerated. Or were they? It might be that the Labour Party as it has existed for nearly a hundred years has indeed disappeared, with only its name left behind, like the grin on the face of the disappearing Cheshire cat.

ALL of which is one man's work. Anthony Charles Lynton Blair was born in May of 1953. His background is partly conventional, partly romantic. His father, Leo, was the son of Charles Parsons, a small-time actor, and Celia Ridgeway, a dancer and a dropout from a rich family. Because they were unmarried at the time Leo was born, he was adopted by a couple in Scotland called Blair. Leo grew up poor and had little education, but his gifts emerged during the war, which he began as a private and ended as a major.

After the war he qualified as a barrister, or trial lawyer, and became a university law teacher at Durham, where his children grew up. He married a woman named Hazel Corscaden, the significance of whose background has gone entirely unremarked. Her family were poor Protestant farmers from County Donegal, one of the three predominantly Catholic counties of the historic province of Ulster, which went to the Irish Free State when Ireland was partitioned, and most of whose Protestant minority subsequently departed. Blair has already moved Labour sharply away from its former "united Ireland" policy, and my hunch is that the cause of Irish nationalism would get no more of a hearing from a Blair government than from John Major's.

In the pattern of upward mobility, Leo sent Tony first to Durham Choristers School (the poet and journalist James Fenton claims to remember him with avuncular affection), and then to Fettes, a public (private) school in Edinburgh. It will be a nice irony if Labour gives us the first "public-school man" as Prime Minister since Harold Macmillan retired in 1963—the subsequent Tory leaders, Heath, Thatcher, and Major, having all come from backgrounds as humble as those of their Labour opponents. More to the point, Leo Blair was a Tory voter for most of his life (though he now loyally supports his son), and Tony has no Labour roots at all, either in intellectual socialism or in the broader labor movement.

He went on to Oxford, where he was a conventional enough undergraduate. He belonged to one or two dining clubs, he dated a few women, and he played for a time in a rock band called Ugly Rumours, which he would now rather forget, though his wife sometimes plays tapes of the

(Continued on page 34)

Arts & Entertainment

PREVIEW

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Theater

Euripides With a Modern Edge

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Sundance Winner: A Loser's Tale

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BY AUSTIN BAER

FROM THE STAGE TO THE PAGE

From Baskerville Publishers, based in Dallas, comes Great Voices, a new series of books that no historically minded opera fan will want to do without: classic biographies of the greats of yesteryear, each accompanied by a well-filled CD of choice recordings. The first volume is Titta Ruffo's *My Parabola*, exceptional in that it comes from the pen of the subject himself, an astounding artist whose ambitions and imaginative powers one may judge by the fact that he recorded not only arias but also the soliloquies of Hamlet, in Italian, to spine-tingling effect (alas, not reissued here). Second in the series is the Renata Tebaldi biography *The Voice of an Angel*, which, title notwithstanding, brings the diva to the page with considerable candor. Both volumes are scrupulously prepared, with an impressive apparatus of notes and dates, not to mention rare archival photographs. Next month look for the life of the tenor Tito Schipa, insightfully set down by his son Tito Schipa Jr., and *How Cinderella Became Queen*, a biography of the mezzo soprano Giulietta Simionato, an artist who combined loftiness of expression with towering passion. (To order call 800-932-7771.)

The first in a series

COURTESY OF BASKERVILLE PUBLISHERS

PUTTING THE RESTLESS TO REST

From July 22 to August 11 Lincoln Center will present an ambitious (some might say hubristic) new festival, and everyone in the business wants to know, Will it fly? Space, as they say, does not permit us to examine the rich multicultural offerings in any detail, but one event deserves special mention: a rare performance of Morton Feldman's String Quartet II, written for and performed by the Kronos Quartet but unrecorded because it consists of a single five-to-six-hour movement (longer than the three acts and two intermissions of *Parsifal*) that contains not a single rest. Feldman is classified as a minimalist, a label that, though accurate, does his exquisitely crafted writing a heinous disservice. According to David Harrington, one of the two Kronos violinists, once the players take up their bows, they do not lift them from the strings of their instruments until the piece ends. Four helpers step forward every ten minutes or so to turn the pages. "I get the most intense backache," Harrington says. "It comes and goes through the experience of that music. At moments I'm so angry at Morton Feldman, and at others I think this is the most beautiful piece of music ever written. And there's every possible emotion in between. When it's over, it takes three to four days to recover physically." There have been only eight performances of the quartet to date. Potential listeners should know a) that no guards will be posted at the door to intercept anyone returning from a comfort break, and b) that this will be the last performance of String Quartet II. For a bite-size sample of Feldman's intricate art try the recording of his single-movement Piano and String Quartet, which runs a mere seventy-nine minutes and thirty-three seconds (Nonesuch). For festival information call 212-721-6500.

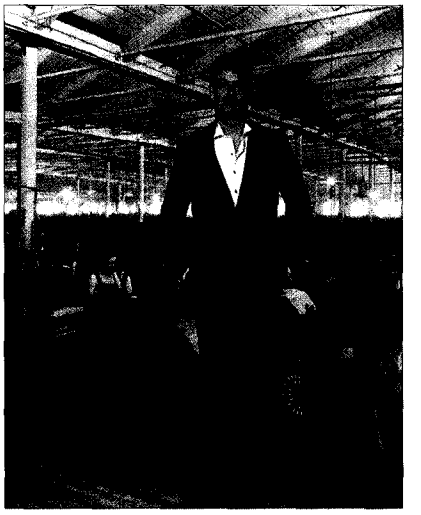
The composer and the unlucky players

COURTESY OF LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL

MICHAEL LAVINE

INNOCENCE LOST

Who was Emmeline? According to local legend in tiny Fayette, Maine, she was a poor girl who, in a time of great hardship, was sent to make money in the cotton mills of Massachusetts. Innocent, friendless, and thirteen years old, she became pregnant, bore a child in secret, and went home, her shame unrevealed. Years later, when a young stranger came to town, she married him, only to discover that the young man she loved was her own son. As Emmeline lay in her coffin, her sister raised a hand to God and declared: "At last she has paid for her sins." Readers of romance novels know this tale from Judith Rossner's *Emmeline*. Viewers of the PBS series *The American Experience* have seen it dissected in a documentary called "Sins of Our Mothers," which confirms that Emmeline existed and fills in much bleak social background, along with a lot of largely unverifiable oral history. In particular the filmmakers could turn up no hard evidence of incest, though to old-timers in Maine the fact is not in dispute. Now the composer Tobias Picker and the poet J. D. McClatchy have recast this sad New England horror story in the medium it cries out for. This summer The Santa Fe Opera presents the world premiere of *Emmeline* the opera, and if the artists have done their work properly, audiences far from Fayette will believe and shudder (July 27 and 31 and August 9; 505-986-5900).



Tobias Picker in his milieu

JOHN CHIDIAC

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York.

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY CYNTHIA CARROZZA

Dance and Theater

BY AUSTIN BAER AND NANCY DALVA

BROADWAY TAKES SEED IN THE GARDEN STATE

The Paper Mill Playhouse bills itself as the State Theatre of New Jersey. Given its proximity to the Big Apple, its mission may seem a peculiar one. But where else is the musical heritage of Broadway treated as classical repertoire? By Broadway standards budgets are modest, and it's the exceptional cast member whose name will ring a bell. Still, the results can be highly satisfying, whether the production concept starts from scratch (as with this season's acclaimed *Nine*) or pays homage to a fancier original (as with this season's no-less-acclaimed *Dreamgirls*). Now the season finale: *Evita* (June 5–July 21). Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber is notoriously touchy about his critics, for good reason, but audiences persist in loving him. Of all his musical confections, none makes as telling a connection with its subject as this knowing hagiography of Eva Perón, the glamorous, short-lived patron saint of Argentina's downtrodden poor: beneath all the false tinsel is the real tinsel. It's sort of a masterpiece. For tickets and directions call 201-376-4343. **—A.B.**

A scene from *Dreamgirls*

GERRY GOODSTEIN

FROM ATHENS TO N.Y.C.

To experience the full horror of *The Trojan Women* you probably have to know Greek, though in the most celebrated version of our time the Rumanian director Andrei Serban brought it home with the power of images and sounds. (No one who saw it is likely to forget the humiliation of Helen—her hair torn out, her skin smeared with feces, raped by a bear.) Tragedies like this are not entertainment but ordeals we undergo to test the fabric of our souls, and it is best to encounter them in exceptional circumstances. In past summers the pioneering artists of New York's En Garde Arts have bridged the gap between ancient times and the present with site-specific productions like the brand-new *J. P. Morgan Saves the Nation*, performed outdoors against the backdrop of Federal Hall on Wall Street, and the Euripides *Orestes*, adapted for our times by Charles L. Mee Jr., mounted in the Penn Yards. This year Mee and En Garde have at *The Trojan Women*, whose ferocity is apt to make the blood run cold no matter how high the mercury. For tickets call 212-279-4200. **—A.B.**

Orestes updated for New York

WILLIAM RAVELLI

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York. Nancy Dalva is a contributor to Dance Ink.

A TROUPE FOR THE ME GENERATION

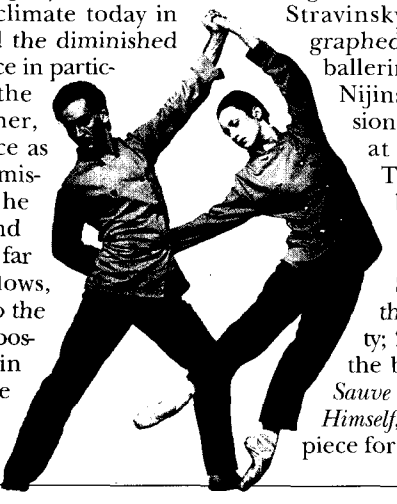
As the first wave of Baby Boomers hits fifty, that quintessential Boomer company Pilobolus Dance Theatre—founded as a collective by a merry band of renegade Dartmouth dance students, with a debut in a cow pasture—turns twenty-five, much of its original spirit intact. The company celebrates at the 1996 American Dance Festival, its longtime annual host, offering a new work dedicated to Charles L. and Stephanie Reinhart, that venerable institution's co-directors (Duke University, June 10–11; Pilobolus offers a different bill June 6–8). Early in his long and varied career in service to dance Reinhart managed the Paul Taylor Dance Company (closing this season's festival July 18–20) and many other troupes that he would later present as an impresario in his own right. Reflecting on those years, Reinhart says, "If I have a religion, it is modern dance." And if modern dance has a Mom and Pop, they are Charlie and Stephanie Reinhart. Among the other companies on the festival's schedule are Erick Hawkins (June 13–15), Merce Cunningham (June 20–22), Eiko & Koma (June 30–July 1), and Mark Morris (July 4–6). For information call 919-684-4444. **—N.D.**

Pilobolus shows its talents

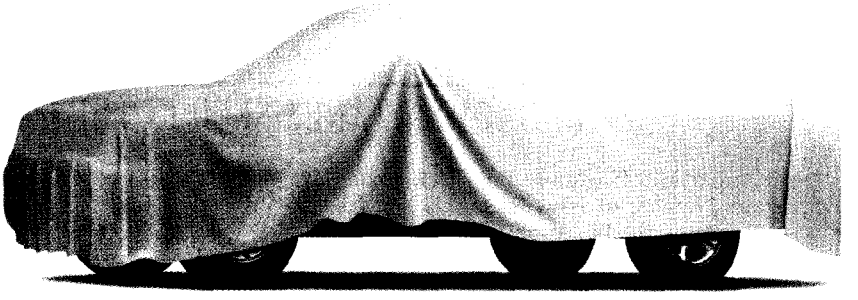
MICHAEL O'NEILL

AN UNLIKELY STORY

Can a virtually unknown choreographer break onto the American scene with a company of his own? Given the economic climate today in the arts in general and the diminished public funding for dance in particular, Leigh Witchel, the founder, choreographer, and producer of Dance as Ever, has taken on a mission improbable, and he knows it. "Musicality and intellect didn't get me far in companies," he allows, "but I am committed to the form—to releasing the possibilities implicit within the choreography, the music and the dancers themselves." This is a man who does not discourage easily. Witness his latest venture: a "rethinking" of *Les Noces*, the landmark Stravinsky score first choreographed by Vaslav Nijinsky's ballerina sibling, Bronislava Nijinska. The Witchel version premieres this month at the Pace Downtown Theater, tucked nearly beneath the Brooklyn Bridge in lower Manhattan (June 20–22, Schimmel Center for the Arts, at Pace University; 212-780-3413). Also on the bill: Witchel's five-man *Sauve Qui Peut: Every Man for Himself*, and a new early-music piece for four women. **—N.D.**



NICHOLAS BURNHAM



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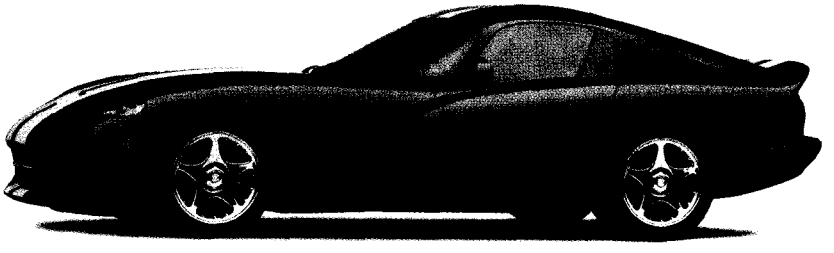

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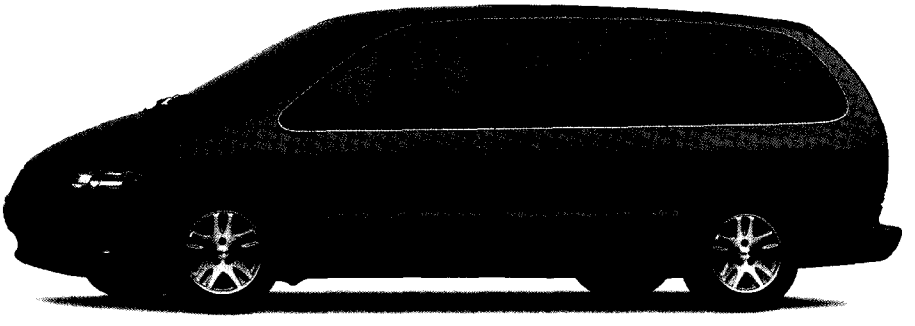

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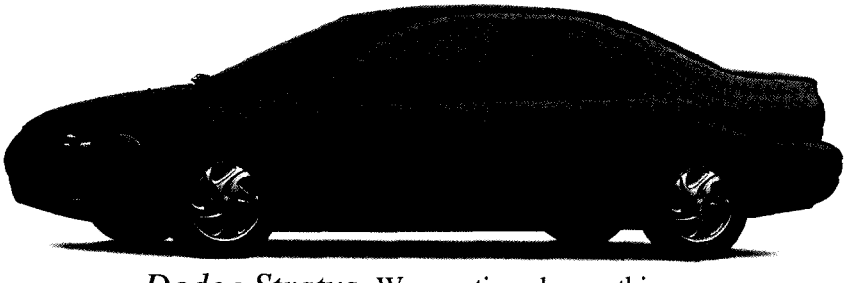
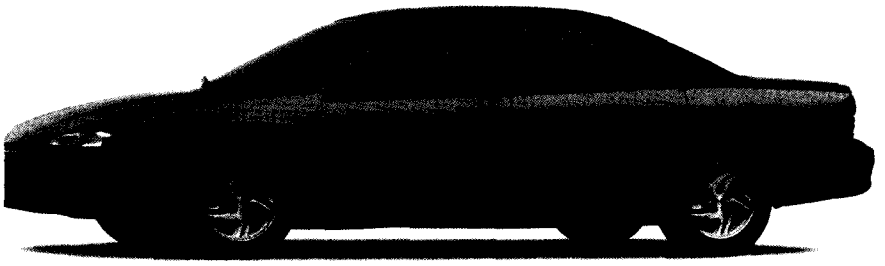
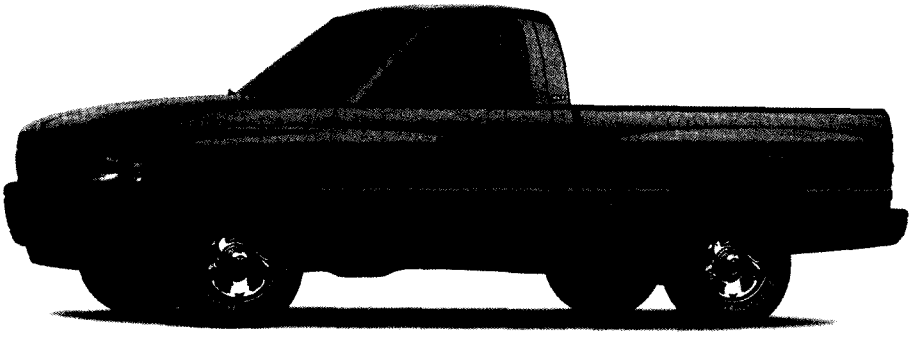


Dodge Stratus. We questioned everything.
Which will explain why this car is so full of answers.



Dodge Intrepid. Its cab-forward design changed everything. Including the very architecture of the American sedan.



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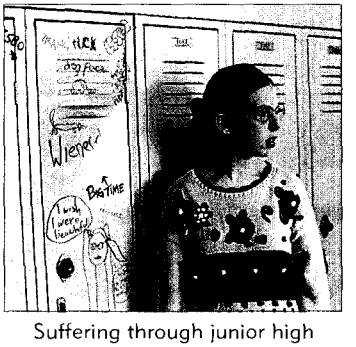
Film

BY ELLA TAYLOR

A TIME TO FORGET

"Why do you hate me?" quavers Dawn Wiener (Heather Matarazzo) to a classmate whose favorite sport is tormenting her. "Because you're ugly," the other says. *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, a black comedy of seventh-grade manners which won the Grand Jury Prize for best dramatic feature at this year's Sundance Film Festival, takes you on a journey into the heart of geekdom that will have you squirming with memories of the geek you once were, or the geek you once terrorized, or both. No after-school special this—Dawn doesn't morph by film's end into a rocket scientist and happily married mother of four. She goes right on being the awkward, bespectacled kid whom everyone likes to beat up on or ignore. A middle child in middle school in middle suburban New Jersey, Dawn is sandwiched uncomfortably between her brilliant computer-nerd older brother, Mark (Matthew Faber), and her unbearably well-behaved little sister, Missy (Daria Kalinina), who flits around in a pink tutu to general adult acclaim. Todd Solondz, who wrote, produced, and directed the film, achieves perfect pitch in balancing the pain and comedy of Dawn's so-called life and pulls astonishing performances from his mostly juvenile actors. If *Welcome to the Dollhouse* offers any affirmation, it's in Dawn's indomitable spirit as she pursues a hopeless crush on her brother's handsome friend, takes vengeance on Missy, and tries to win the love of friends and family. Brendan Sexton Jr. is outstanding as Dawn's best friend, who shows his affection by continually threatening to rape her. The movie is not a coming-of-age story—it's a tale of surviving childhood, which in Solondz's delightfully warped view is by definition a gruesome experience. Take that, Dr. Spock!

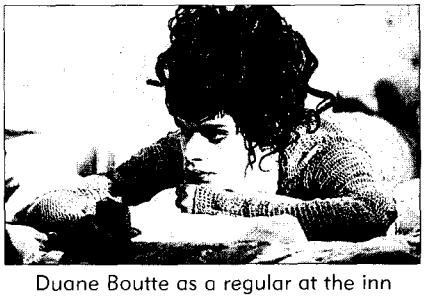


Suffering through junior high

JENNIFER CARCHMAN

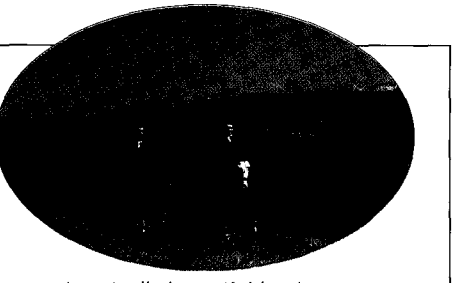
THE MEN BEHIND THE MOVEMENT

One of the most inventive movies to emerge from the thriving gay film scene, *Stonewall* is loosely based on Martin Duberman's book about the 1969 riots that sparked the fledgling gay-rights movement into full action. Although it opens with newsreel footage, the BBC movie is not *the* Stonewall story but *a* (semi-fictionalized) Stonewall story, about a group of Greenwich Village homosexuals reinventing their identities as the politics of the sixties unfold around them. La Miranda (Guillermo Diaz) is an apolitical Puerto Rican drag queen who hangs out at the famous Stonewall Inn and resists emotional involvement until he meets the butch Matty Dean (Frederick Weller), a rich kid who has recast himself as a backwoods boy. The ups and downs of their love affair are complicated by Matty's involvement with the Mattachine Society, a group of buttoned-down homosexuals who pattern their polite activism after the civil-rights movement. Director Nigel Finch (who died of AIDS in 1995, just before the film was finished) was affectionate in his treatment of this group, but his loyalty clearly lay with the drag queens, the pulse of this warmhearted, openly sentimental movie. After suffering a terrible personal loss, the gentle queen mother (played by the excellent Duane Boutte) snaps under police brutality, and the repressed outrage that has built throughout the movie erupts. The movie ends as it began, with a police raid. Only this time the regulars at the inn are disinclined to take the abuse lying down—and *Stonewall* the movie joins forces with Stonewall the history.



Duane Boutte as a regular at the inn

COURTESY OF STRAND RELEASING



A typically beautiful landscape

COURTESY OF MIRAMAX ZOE

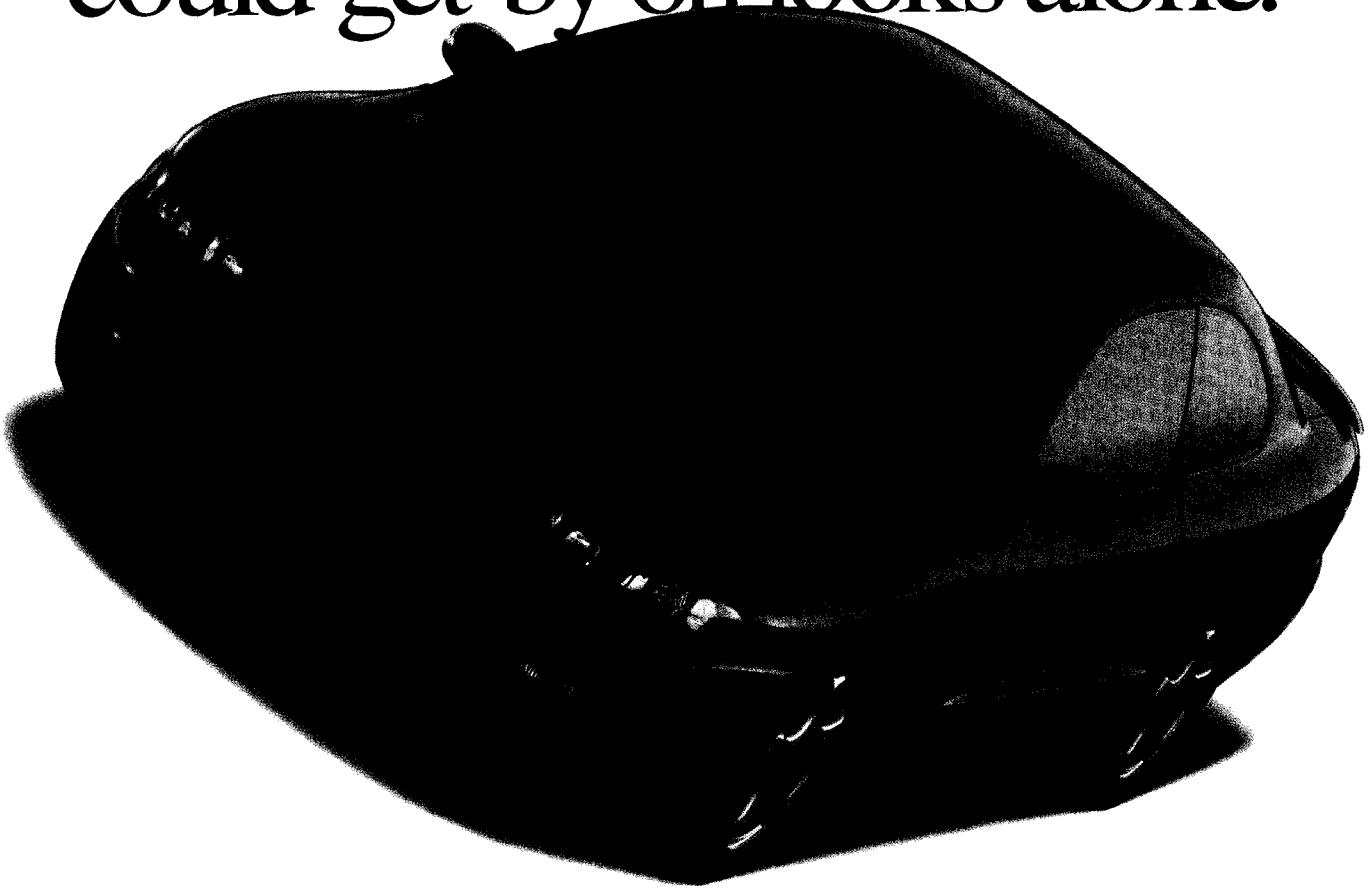
EQUINE EPIC

Jean-Paul Rappeneau's *The Horseman on the Roof* is stuffed with back-to-back sword fights, elegantly costumed crowd scenes, chases, piles of corpses with staring eyes, and bucolic landscaping, so that you have no idea what's going on except that a cholera epidemic is raging and some Italians are revolting against their Austrian occupiers. All this action because a Type-A young blade's mother has told him to "live recklessly." It's 1840, and Angelo (Olivier Martinez) gallops through Provence saving people and evading assorted pursuers. This goes on for what seems like years until a French grande dame (the beautiful and talented Juliette Binoche) shows up to calm Angelo down. Together they do some more galloping, saving, and evading, while falling in disappointingly chaste love. Evidently a full half hour of this beautifully shot muddle was snipped off by scissor-happy Miramax Films. They chopped either too little or too much. If you want to see a Rappeneau epic that works, rent *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

Ella Taylor is a film critic for LA Weekly.

ANSWERS TO THE MAY CHALLENGE:
1. Branford Marsalis 2. Robert Redford

Why we think Avenger could get by on looks alone.



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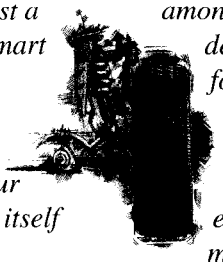

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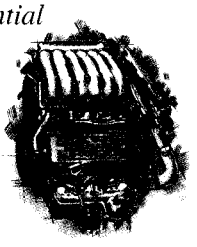

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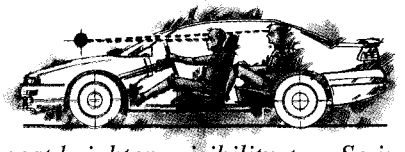

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(Continued from page 26)
band at parties to tease him. A.C.L. Blair, St. John's College '72 (Oxford dates classes by the first year), has learned one lesson from W. J. Clinton, University College '68. He flatly denies that he ever so much as touched, let alone inhaled, any form of illicit narcotic. A cynic might say that this makes him unique among student rockers of the 1970s, but that's his story, and it fits the serious and even priggish picture of young Tony. People who knew him then still tend to think him a bit of a stick, as the English say: dour, worthy, maybe a little dull.

As interesting as what he did at Oxford is what, apart from drugs, he didn't do. He had no political interests, never spoke at the Union debating club, joined no left-wing societies, didn't protest the tail end of the Vietnam war or Margaret Thatcher's policies as Education Secretary in the 1970–1974 Tory government, which were a cause of much radical rage at the time. Other than the law he was studying, his chief interest was religion. An Australian friend, Peter Thomson, introduced him to the works of John Macmurray, whose *Persons in Relation*, *The Self as Agent*, and other books attempted an amalgam of Christianity with the politics of "community."

Since then Blair has remained a disciple of Macmurray's, an exponent of "communitarianism," and a practicing Anglo-Catholic, or "High" Episcopalian. Americans may not easily realize how unusual this makes him. We have a Church of England "by law established," and its services are regularly attended by about three percent of the population of England, which is now the most irreligious country in the West. Only a minority of British Prime Ministers in this century have been Christians in any serious sense, and it is possible in British politics for someone like Thatcher's former lieutenant Norman (Lord) Tebbit to be both a bareknuckle populist right-winger and a self-proclaimed atheist—a combination hard to imagine in America.

After Oxford, Blair became a barrister, and practiced for several years in industrial and employment law. At his law chambers he met another young lawyer, Cherie Booth, who comes from Liverpool and is the daughter of the actor Tony Booth, best known for playing the son-in-law of Alf Garnett, the Cockney bigot in the television comedy *Till Death Us Do Part*, which inspired, if that's the word, *All in the Family*. Blair and Booth married in 1980, and have two sons and a daughter. Cherie did brilliantly on her bar exams, way ahead of Blair. She is probably a smarter person than her husband, and certainly a better lawyer. Last year she "took silk"—the quaint phrase for when an English barrister joins the Inner Bar, puts "QC," for Queen's Counsel, after her name, and trebles her fees.

Part of Blair's public good fortune has been timing. In the early 1980s the Labour Party was in very bad shape. The last Labour government had been a sorry affair. Harold Wilson resigned as Prime Minister in 1976, abruptly and in a miasma of scandal, and his successor, James Callaghan, barely hung on until his government fell apart in 1979. The party was falling apart also, torn between the social-democratic right and a new left, markedly different from the old left.

Most great political parties have been coalitions, often of highly disparate elements. Think of the Democrats in their Rooseveltian heyday—that truly strange alliance of organized labor, big-city bosses, intellectual liberals, northern ethnics, and southern segregationists. Labour was no odder than that, but it was odd enough. It had always been a "broad church" (in a hackneyed phrase beloved of Wilson), bred from the various strains already described and stretching from conservative union men, often North Country Methodists or Irish Catholics, to out-and-out fellow travelers. By the 1970s this had changed. Stalinism was in eclipse, and a quasi-Trotskyist new left was in the ascendant.

After the 1979 debacle in which Margaret Thatcher and the Tories won, this left, led by Tony Benn, very nearly captured the Labour Party, and the old right peeled off to form the Social Democratic Party. Labour fought the 1983 general election on an ultra-left platform that included withdrawal from the European Community and unilateral nuclear disarmament. This manifesto was nicely described by the Labour MP Gerald Kaufman as the longest suicide note in history, and so it proved. Labour went down to its heaviest defeat (in terms of seats lost) since 1940.

On the face of it, this was not an auspicious moment to enter Parliament as a Labour MP, as Tony Blair did, but it meant that he avoided the worst of the intestine fighting in the party. He had had one dry run the year before, following a rite of passage in which aspiring politicians begin their careers by fighting for a hopeless seat. For a Tory this might be a mining constituency in South Wales or Yorkshire, for a Labour lad or lass a retirement seaside resort or somewhere in the Home Counties, the outer suburbs of London. Blair had duly stood for Labour in 1982 in a by-election in Beaconsfield, northwest of London.

It would have been a lost cause at any time; while Thatcher basked in the glory of the Falklands war, it was utterly doomed. I covered that by-election fourteen years ago, and recently turned to my clippings hoping to find some percipient intimation that one of the candidates might be a future Prime Minister. Alas, I seem to have been struck mostly by the sameness of the three candidates, all professional, middle-class Oxford men, with Anthony Blair (as he was before he chummily Tonified himself) plausible but not electrifying.

He subsequently became the Labour candidate for the safe seat of Sedgefield, in Durham, but not painlessly. There was a left-wing rival for the nomination, Les Huckfield, and the way Blair talked his way into being chosen by the local Labour Party less than three weeks before the general election involved a mixture of charm, cajolery, mild misrepresentation, and shameless exploitation of the show-business background of his wife, who, he said in an unfeminist way, would make a new career in the northeast of England if her husband became an MP there. (She didn't.)

Shortly after he was elected, there was a Labour rally in Sedgefield, at which Blair began to outline what was to be his great project. Labour had lost touch with the people it was meant to represent, he said. It should come to terms with its defeat and Thatcher's crushing victory. The party must grow out of its old tribal traditions and modernize itself. He was followed by another speaker, Dennis Skinner, one of the firebrands of the Labour left, who has for more than a quarter century bitterly, and sometimes wittily, insulted Tories in the House of Commons—though he has just as often insulted his party colleagues.

At that meeting Skinner denounced the new MP alongside him for his betrayal of the socialist cause and then, in a moment of pre-arranged theater, pointed to Huckfield, who had just strolled into the back of the hall, and shouted that he was the man who should have been chosen instead of Blair. The left-wingers in the audience cheered to the echo. Blair suffered his public humiliation in silence. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that his life since has been calculated revenge for that moment.

In a parliamentary Labour Party that was not then bursting with talent, Blair soon shone. He was an official opposition spokesman within a year of becoming an MP. Following the Labour rout of 1983 the amiable but hopeless Michael Foot had been succeeded as Labour leader by Neil Kinnock, also amiable and, as it turned out, not much less hopeless, who duly went on to lose not one but two elections: in 1987, when everyone expected the Tories to win again under Thatcher, and in 1992, when many people, including Kinnock, were amazed that the Tories won under Major.

Blair has brilliantly marketed a product that no one quite understands, known as New Labour—or Labour Lite.

After that defeat Kinnock resigned and was replaced by yet another amiable man, John Smith, who was more capable than either of his predecessors and had made some quiet political headway before he suddenly died of a heart attack in May of 1994. Blair had bided his time but now went into action with ruthless effect. He leaned on his contemporary, colleague, and, until then, close political friend Gordon Brown to stand aside, and won the leadership election against John Prescott, "old Labour" par excellence, a man of working-class background, generous emotion, and incoherent eloquence.

Just quite what Blair had in mind was not obvious that summer of 1994, but there were audible signals in his speeches during the leadership race: "The new right had struck a chord. There was a perception that there was too much collective power, too much bureaucracy, too much state intervention, and too many vested interests created around it." Too much, in other words, of what the Labour Party had always stood for. Now it was time, Blair said, to move "from the politics of protest to the politics of government."

THE ruthlessness he had shown in becoming leader was even clearer after July of 1994. He gave a barnstorming performance at his first party conference, the following October, replete with indistinct but minatory rhetoric of modernization. And he arranged a special conference to be held in the spring, to put to rest the hallowed Clause Four. It was duly scrapped, and replaced by something quite lacking the lucidity of the original, a lengthy, obscure list of "Aims and Values" that might have been the mission statement of a large corporation keen to display its social awareness.

Even Blair could not break the party's links with the union movement overnight, but they have been steadily chipped away. Blair has made it plain that the unions will enjoy no special favors when he reaches Downing Street: "Unions should do the job of trade unions. The Labour Party must do the job of government. The British people expect Labour to govern for the whole country, and we will." This spring Blair moved to end the arrangement, existing since Keir Hardie's day, by which unions "sponsor" individual Labour MPs.

All of which may have been understandable enough. It is plainly the case that by the 1970s the unions had become an arrogant and destructive force, and that their connection with Labour was politically damaging for the party. When the Thatcher government curbed the unions' power by removing their privileged status outside the law (originally conferred by Disraeli, of all people), the step was welcomed by almost everyone except the union bosses. Any Labour leader who wants to become Prime Minister must accept that.

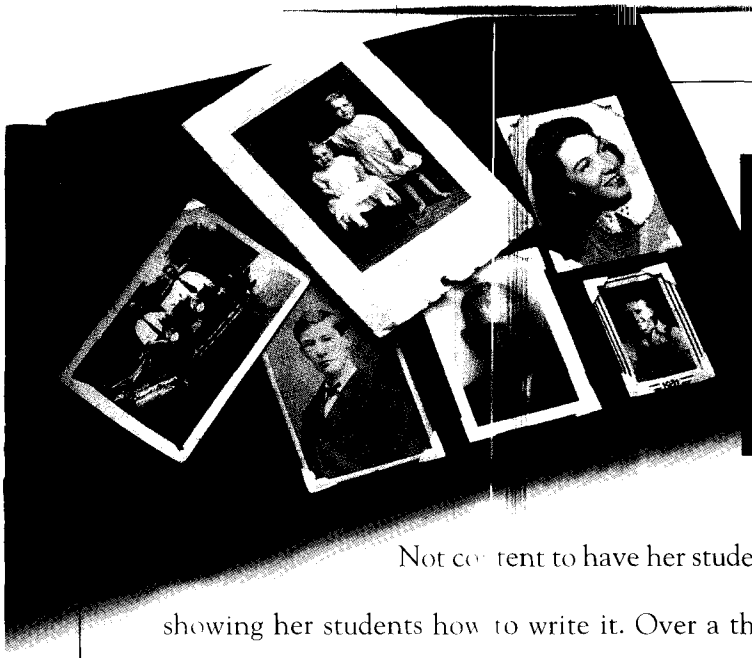
He must also accept that heavy taxation is unpopular, that rainbow coalitions of ethnic and sexual minorities arouse little enthusiasm among ordinary voters, and that the kind of liberalism that appears better disposed toward criminals than toward their victims doesn't win many votes either. Hence Blair's insistence that there will be no return to the taxation rates of the last Labour government, hence his fulsome tribute to a policeman murdered on duty and his almost-too-neat promise to be "tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime."

There is also a growing consensus, way beyond neo- or paleo-conservatism, that "Dan Quayle was right": that the hedonistic individualism of the 1960s and 1970s was socially destructive, and that its ultimate victims have been not the well-to-do bohemians who first propagated it but the poor. Hence also Blair's language of responsibility, duty, and self-discipline. This was shrewd as well as sincere.

There was, finally, the need to recognize in intellectual honesty that traditional command-economy socialism has had its day, and that in every Western country the traditional industrial proletariat that was the labor movement's original constituency has dwindled to a minority. All of that was necessary. But Blair has gone much further—beyond the call of duty or even ambition, one might say.

Despite his political triumphs, Blair, and the Blairs, have been much mocked, with obvious comparisons made between Tony and Cherie and Bill and Hillary. They have the same flavor of radical chic, the same affinity with what we call the chattering classes, or liberal media folk, and the luvvies, or self-regarding, mildly progressive show-biz and media folk, and the same cronyism. Blair's inner court is not at all the same as the official shadow cabinet. His principal courtiers are Alastair Campbell, a former political journalist, witnessed earlier twisting the BBC's arm, and Peter Mandelson, a Labour MP who has earned his spin-doctor's M.D. cum laude and has just written a hero-worshipping account, *The Blair Revolution*.

This book does not really explain what form the revolution is going to take when Blair has to rule the country, as distinct from lecturing it. To the extent that there is a Blairite political philosophy, its lan-



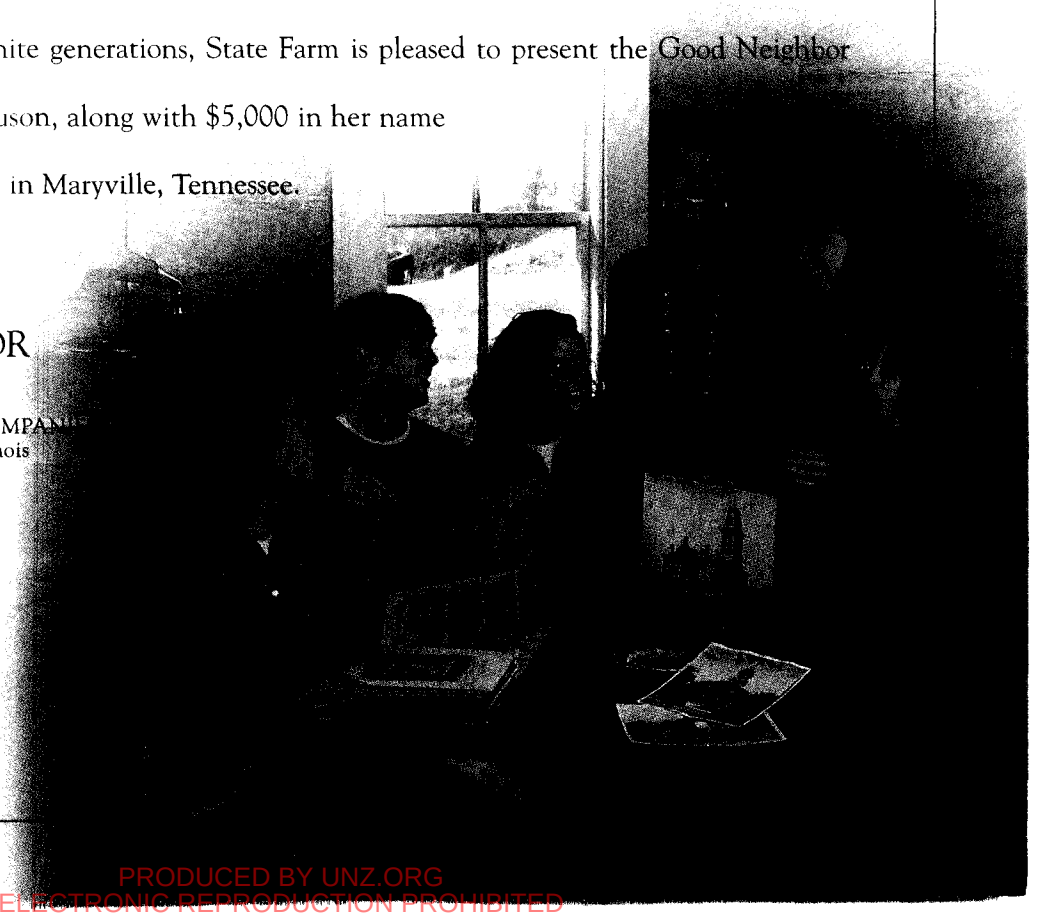
In This Class, History Isn't Measured In Years, But In Volumes.

Not content to have her students read about history, Penny Ferguson set about showing her students how to write it. Over a three-year period, her 11th-grade English classes researched, located old photos for, wrote, and published a three-volume history of their county. The students sold the books throughout the community to commemorate the bicentennial of their state.

Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of the project was the interaction that took place between the students and local history experts with whom they consulted.

"Many of these experts were over the age of seventy," remembers Ferguson, "and what great respect and awe they generated from the students with the wisdom and the knowledge they had to share."

For teaching how an appreciation for history and the written word can unite generations, State Farm is pleased to present the Good Neighbor Award to Dr. Penny Ferguson, along with $5,000 in her name to Maryville High School in Maryville, Tennessee.



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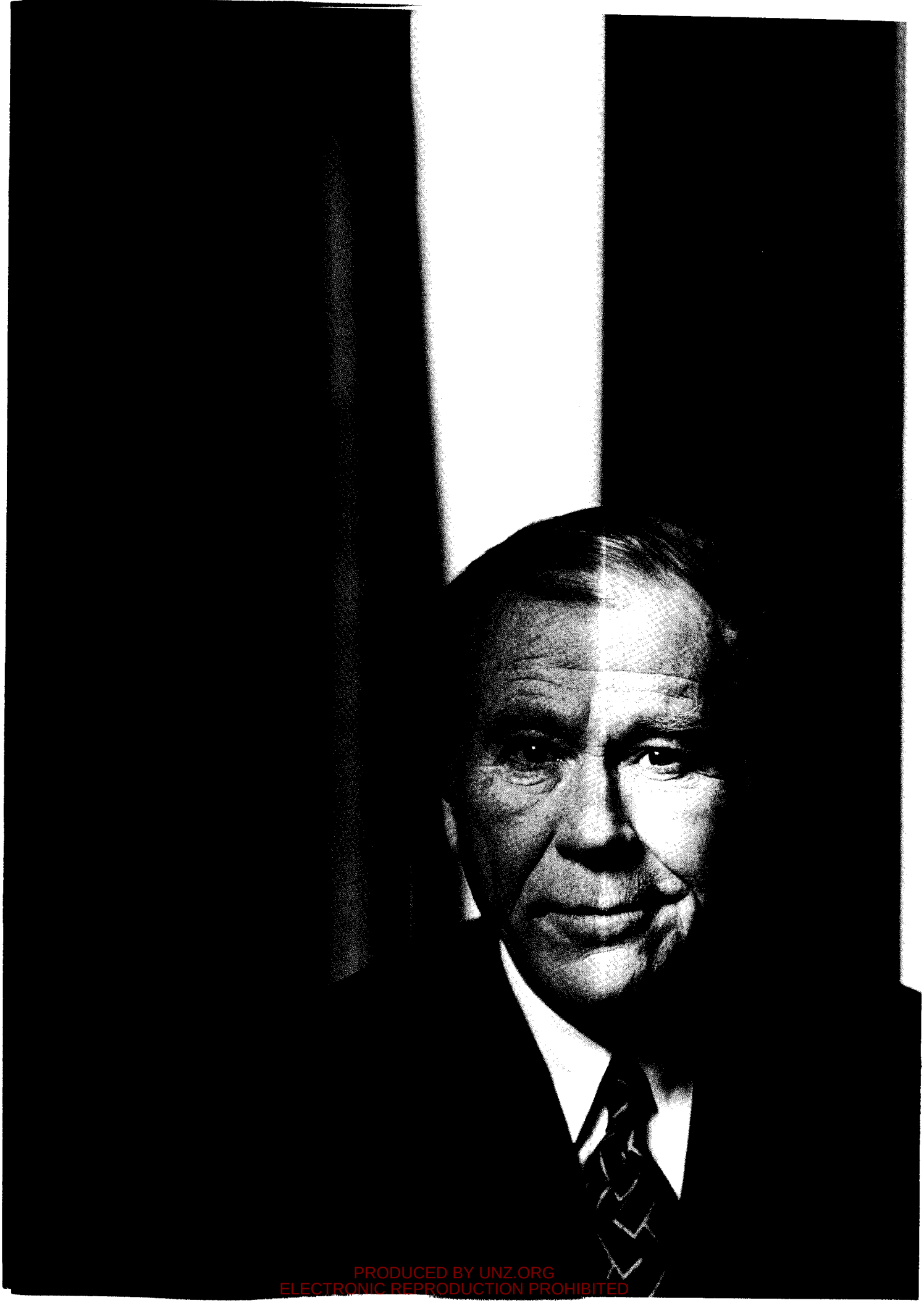

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guage is either vague—"community," "solidarity," "cohesion"—or opaque. "Stakeholding" has an impressive ring but has yet to be satisfactorily defined. Of course there is territory to be exploited by Blair. Everyone knows that the years since Margaret Thatcher was first elected (and Ronald Reagan) have seen a widening of the gap between rich and poor, though most British people are now better off than they were in 1979, an assertion that isn't true of most Americans. There is a perception that the social fabric has frayed, with beggars on the streets and increasing violent crime. Many people claim to have disliked some aspects of "Thatcherism," even if the claim is a little hypocritical, since they often went on voting for it. Blair's strategy is to appropriate the economic gains of the 1980s but to mitigate the worst side effects, differentiating himself from the Tories by shifts of emphasis, by a rhetoric of community and civic virtue, and by simply playing on the undoubted disenchantment or weary boredom of the electorate after seventeen years of Tory rule.

He has not explained in detail what his government would do. Instead he has conducted a brilliant marketing operation for a product no one quite understands, known as New Labour—or Labour Lite, as someone has unkindly called it. And in the process he has lorded it over the party he now leads, and rubbed his colleagues' noses in it. It was right to recognize (as the chattering classes are still reluctant to do) that the Tories have some genuine achievements to their credit in these past seventeen years. It is another thing to say so in the way Blair does: to insist that "the Thatcher-Reagan leadership" of the 1980s "got certain things right. A greater emphasis on enterprise. Rewarding, not penalizing, success. Breaking up vested interests."

Just as there are ways and ways of saying something, there are places and places to say it. When Blair accepted an invitation to go to Australia last summer and address Rupert Murdoch's corporate gathering, it was almost a calculated insult to his party. Murdoch has been a bitter enemy of Labour, and his gutter tabloid the *Sun* has boasted that it won the last election for the Tories; indeed, its coverage was fantastically tendentious and biased. Murdoch's minions were a remarkable audience for a Labour leader to address, as he did in even more remarkable words:

"During the sixties and seventies the left developed, almost in substitution for its economic prescriptions, which by then were failing, a type of social individualism that confused, at points at least, liberation from prejudice with a disregard for moral structures. It fought for racial and sexual equality, which was entirely right. It appeared indifferent to the family and individual responsibility, which was wrong.

"There was a real danger, occasionally realized, that single-issue pressure groups moved into the vacuum. Women's groups wrote the women's policy. Environmental groups wrote the environmental policy, and so on. This was the same elsewhere. I remember a telling intervention of a speaker at the Republican Convention of 1984 in the U.S. asking rhetorically, 'When was the last time you heard a Democrat say *no*?' It was too close to the truth for comfort."

When the leader of a party of "the left" approvingly quotes Republicans, something very funny is going on.

On top of this came a row about the education of the Blairs' son, who is being sent to an educationally superior Roman Catholic school (Cherie is a Catholic) across London, rather than to his nearest high school, as the spirit of party policy, if not its letter, demands. And all the while Blair has imperiously kept his colleagues in their places, stifling any voices of dissent. He has appointed a "shadow team" of more than a hundred parliamentary spokesmen—a ridiculous number considering that there are only 271 Labour MPs in all.

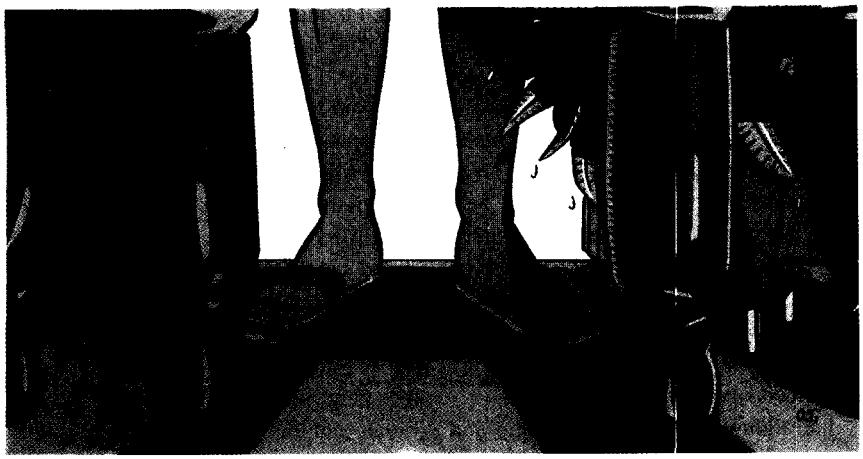
These shadows are expected to voice no independent opinions. When one of them, Clare Short, thought out loud about the possibility of legalizing cannabis, and another, Ron Davies, did the same about the Prince of Wales's fitness to rule (neither topic unknown in public debate), they were silenced and made to recant in tones worthy of a Stalinist show trial. All in all, there has scarcely been a moment in the past two years when Blair, given a choice between his party's doctrines and conciliating what he thinks is public opinion, has not chosen the latter.

It is no wonder (though fascinating enough) that he is deeply admired by newspaper columnists on the soft right, like Bernard Levin, or even on the hard right, like Paul Johnson, both of whom formerly adored Thatcher. No wonder either that another Tory columnist, William Rees-Mogg, of *The Times*, writes with approval of the way that the Blair leadership can now "accept right-wing policies which Margaret Thatcher did not even contemplate in the 1979 manifesto."

And it is no wonder that Blair's relations with his party are what they are. Alan Watkins, the doyen of London political journalists, has been writing weekly since Harold Macmillan was Prime Minister and John Kennedy President. He observed not long ago that although Labour MPs have gone along with Blair, the truth is that most of them hate what he is doing to their party. But, then, the feeling is mutual. Someone who knows him says, "You have to remember that the great passion in Tony's life is his hatred of the Labour Party."

You also have to remember our old friend English irony as you read that, but it is not just a joke. Tony Blair's career has been a freak of political nature. When he was chosen leader, two years ago, the Labour Party was punch-drunk, demoralized by its miserable run of lost elections, desperate for any chance of returning to office. The puritanical "culture of defeat" might have permeated sections of the movement, but the brighter and more ambitious in the party had not gone into politics to spend a lifetime in opposition. They wanted their ministerial red boxes and secretaries; they were fed up with waiting in line for cabs and craved black limos. That meant that they wanted a leader who could win, and in the process they struck a Faustian bargain.

Except that Faust knew what he was doing. Labour had not truly reckoned with Blair. The party did not realize just how deep was his contempt for its traditions, and certainly didn't guess that its first Prime Minister in a generation will be further to the right not only than any previous Labour premier but than several postwar Tory premiers. It is an extraordinary performance, and a political triumph of sorts—but for whom? The life, times, and government of Tony Blair may yet be seen as Margaret Thatcher's greatest victory.



Watering to Endanger

An incident in Singapore leaves the author feeling at once protected and threatened

by Steven Wrage

THOUGH I have not yet been convicted of any caning-worthy offense, I did have my first brush with the law one evening not long ago. I was summoned to the door of my Singapore apartment by several sets of five sharp, loud knocks. I am still trying to sort out what followed and why.

I had arrived home at about 9:00 P.M. and finally took pity on the fern left on the balcony outside my door by the previous resident. I watered it thoroughly, really soaking the thing. Then I went down to the pool for a late swim.

Wearing nothing but a pair of swim trunks, I was sitting at the dining-room table under the ceiling fan, writing a letter home, when the first five knocks came. I took a second to pull a shirt on over my head, and before I could get to the door, there were five more knocks. By the time I arrived at the door, barefoot and with my hair messed up, a third round was beginning.

I pulled the door open fast, a little irritated at being bothered after 10:00 P.M., expecting to find my neighbor's kids or—who knows?—a salesman. I was startled to find two officers, standing shoulder to shoulder in the door frame. They pretty well filled the opening—or would have if they had been taller.

The moment had the makings of a minor confrontation. I had jerked the door open, and I hadn't moved back at once. I guess I was annoyed and didn't want to see them come inside. To my relief they stepped back two feet and pointed off to my left. I tried to brush my hair down, stepped out onto the doormat, and looked left. In silence we three gazed at the not very healthy fern.

THE senior guy broke the silence. "You *do* live here?" he asked. He spoke in an intelligent voice with an educated British accent. No introductions or preliminaries, though.

"I do," I said.

"And this *is* your plant?"

"It is." This was all said very solemnly, and I tried to keep things moving just a step at a time as I figured out what bothered them about it. Besides, I didn't seem to be able to come up with responses of more than two words.

What could be the problem? Plant abuse? Obstruction of traffic?

But everyone had plants outside the door, without exception. And without exception, I admitted to myself, the others looked better than mine. Insufficient entryway decoration? Was I letting down the side, as they say around here?

"You are subjecting the neighborhood to the danger of dengue hemorrhagic fever," the officer announced matter-of-factly, pronouncing "dengue" like Ben-Gay, the mentholated rub.

"I am?" This time it was a question, not an admission.

"That saucer is a magnet for lethal disease," the officer said without a trace of humor. "Standing water is precisely what pregnant female mosquitoes are searching for."

I realize now that I could have said I had done it to be gallant. At the time, however, it seemed to all of us a very serious situation, and one that had to be dealt with immediately.

"I understand," I said. "Give me a second and I'll take care of it." They stepped farther back and watched while I positioned myself to lift the pot without straining my back. Offering their close supervision but not a hint of assistance, they watched intently as I squatted down and hoisted the fern up and pivoted to the side with it. To do this I had to bury my face in the fern, and when I set it down, it was in front of the doormat and between them and the doorway.

"I'll be back in a minute," I said nonsensically. Leaving them on the balcony, I carried the earthenware dish full of muddy water in through the apartment, trying not to spill it. I had thought for an instant of dumping it off the balcony, but that would probably come under what is known in newspaper headlines as the "Killer Litter" law, covering the throwing of any object of any size off a high-rise and bringing huge fines and prison terms.

The apartment is all bare floors (to go with the bare walls and bare windows), but I was nonetheless unhappy about dribbling water through the entrance hall, up the stairs, across the landing, into the bedroom, around the end of the bed, and into the bathroom, where I

Illustration by Daniel Torres

emptied the dish into the bathtub, thoroughly dirtying the tub.

I brought the dish back outside and put it in place, and prepared to lift the fern into it. By now there were five others on the balcony—the man who appears to live alone next door and the family of four who leave twelve pairs of shoes neatly stacked on a two-tiered rack to the right of their door.

"I don't recommend that you do that," the officer said. I stopped and looked up at him. "Plants do very well here without saucers, and the problem will recur. You will notice that none of your neighbors use saucers under their plants."

I straightened up and looked up and down the balcony as I made sense of what he had said. My neighbors stepped back accommodatingly so that I could see.

"You're right," I said. "I won't." I bent down and picked up the heavy saucer, and then tried to find a different place to set the wet and dirty thing down. I didn't want it inside, and I didn't want to set it down again outside, because I had just picked it up. Besides, I thought, one more exchange of words and these scourges of disease will be on their way and I can take it in and wash it off in the dirty bathtub and then stow it someplace. Finally I just stood up straight, holding the thing like a big and awkward steering wheel.

THE officer spoke again, this time in a less official tone. Perhaps he felt I needed to know that all was forgiven and we could converse a little. Perhaps he just wanted more information. In any case his conversation was all question and answer, and question and answer is no conversation. It occurs to me now that this was the moment he might have issued a citation or a summons, and he may have been trying to reassure me that he wasn't going to do so.

"You work at the university, is it?" The tag-line question is typical of Straits Chinese.

"I do," I said, thinking simultaneously 1) that professors are supposed to have all sorts of status and prestige in this culture, whereas I stood there dressed like a barefoot coolie with mud on my hands, and 2) that if I was of the learned elite, I ought to have been able to come out with more than monosyllabic answers.

"I teach courses on politics," I said, knowing as I said it that the last thing I wanted to do was open the door to a discussion of politics. "American politics." No, I thought, that's worse still.

"And are you living here alone?"

"Yes, I am alone at this point."

"And will your wife be joining you?" I suppose he might have seen my wedding ring, well exposed as I stood with the dish covering my stomach, or he might have had access to forms I had filled out at the university and again at the condominium-association office. It occurred to me at last to wonder how he had known where I worked, but I supposed he was kept informed of new arrivals and their occupations, and it must have been a subject of special interest to all the police in the neighborhood when, a few years before, the university bought a half dozen apartments here for putting up medium-term visitors like me—a steady flow of foreigners on whom to keep an eye.

"She will be coming in a few months," I answered.

"And will you be having other visitors?"

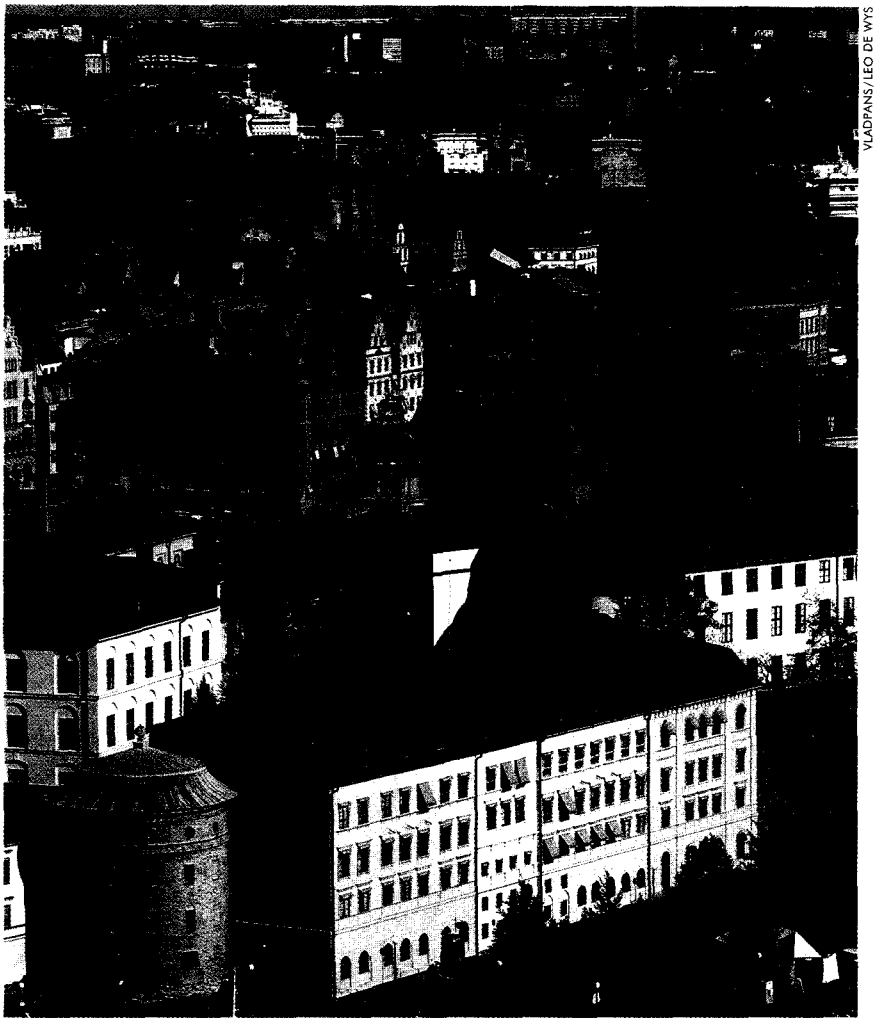
"It's hard to know at this point," I said, not wanting to volunteer that my father would be joining me in a month or so.

There was a long silence, and I suppose that if it had continued another three seconds, I would have found something to say, no matter how inane. Instead the officer pronounced the inanity. "I'm glad you understand, then," he said. "We all need to work together to do our part to keep Singapore safe and secure and healthy for all."

I promised I would do my part, and watched as the policemen headed off slowly along the balcony, inspecting each doorway, plant, and porch light as they passed. I noticed for the first time that all the porch lights were lit except mine.

I went back inside, wondering how they could have known about that plant an hour after I had watered it, and concluding that it must have been my neighbors who turned me in.

Later I recognized what an effective bit of police work that had been. I don't think it did much to keep us all from perishing of dengue fever, but it gave me the message: Big Brother cares about me, and he knows exactly where I live.



VLADPANS/LEO DE WYS

Turn-of-the-Century Treasures

Like Vienna and Budapest, Stockholm is rich in Art Nouveau architecture

by Corby Kummer

WHEN I visited Stockholm, late last summer, I was prepared to keep my eye on design. Blond Scandinavian furniture, after all, defined forward-thinking sophistication when I was growing up, and big floral Marimekko prints in a living room meant that its occupant wanted to make the world a better place. More recently sophistication in design has meant taking inspiration from the blond neoclassical furniture named for King Gustav III, the eighteenth-century Swedish aesthete; the Swedish company Ikea is among the leaders of a revival of a style that looks like delicate, sun-bleached French Provincial.

I was happily surprised to find that Stockholm is filled with echoes and expressions of two of my favorite styles—Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts, which co-existed in the 1890s and the first decades of this century. Every city has a defining era. Stockholm's was the Belle Epoque, when Alfred Nobel was amassing the explosives-based fortune that would allow him to establish his prizes, and when the profits of industrialization were changing the face of the city. The streets the guidebooks will tell you to wander are the preserved medieval ones of Gamla Stan, Stockholm's old town, with their imposing baroque palaces. They are indeed charming, but the streets that delighted me most were those of Ostermalm, a fashionable residential neighborhood in the center, where I saw everywhere perfectly maintained examples of the restrained, elegant Swedish versions of both Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts architecture. Ostermalm's indoor market, for instance, which houses the city's best victuallers, has the Edwardian grandness, the wrought-iron flourishes and polished mahogany counters, of Harrods Food Halls—not to mention the silkiest herring I've ever tasted, and little cartons of tiny wild strawberries and juicy, pillow-soft cloudberries picked in the Swedish countryside.

I would return to Vienna, Barcelona, or Budapest simply to walk at liberty through its Art Nouveau neighborhoods, and now Stockholm, too, is on my list. Given Sweden's fierce and long-standing love of nature, its artists and craftsmen found special resonance in the sinuous natural forms of Art Nouveau. The new wealth of the period helped them to further Sweden's first internationally recognized painting style, called National Romantic for its Barbizon-influenced landscapes. Nobel wanted to be the eternal patron of the world's intellectual heritage; his fellow industrialists were content to glorify themselves and their friends, and those friends were often architects and artists.

In the course of my wandering I devised an Art Nouveau itinerary, which in-

Baroque, Art Nouveau, and National Romantic buildings in the center of Stockholm

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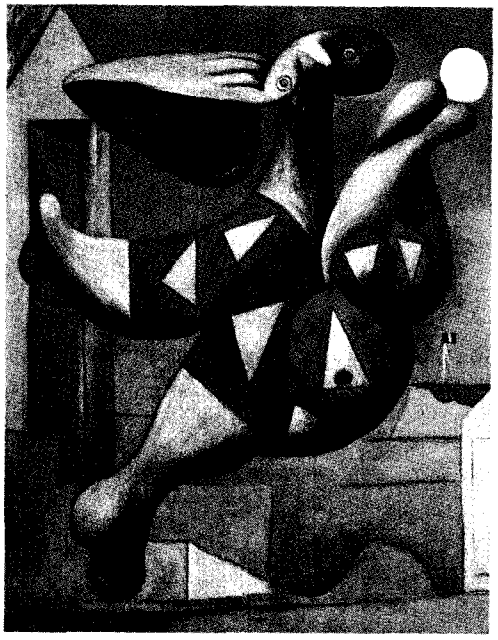
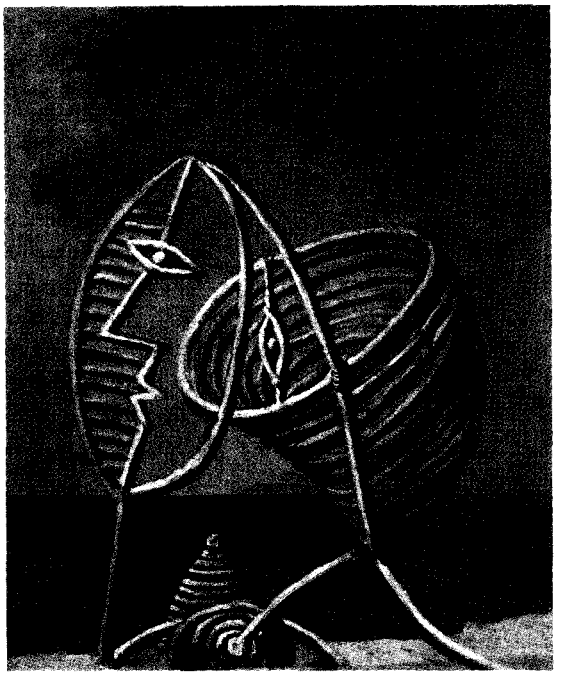


Picasso and

Left to right: Portraits of Marie-Thérèse Walter
Bust of a Girl, 1926. Musée Picasso, Paris • *Bather with Beach Ball*, 1932. The Museum of Modern Art •
Girl Before a Mirror, 1932. The Museum of Modern Art • *Portrait of a Young Woman*, 1936. Musée Picasso, Paris
Photo R.M.N. ©1996 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY



Portraiture

Enter Pablo Picasso's world through 220 paintings and drawings of those who mattered most to the artist. His family. His friends. His lovers. Picasso's fascination with the combination of a person's physical and emotional attributes led him to continually devise new ways to treat the portrait. Through his art we can trace the progression of modernism from the classically influenced paintings of the late 19th century, through the blue and rose periods of the early 20th century, and on into cubism and surrealism. This first comprehensive portrait exhibition, *Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transformation,* demonstrates the range of Picasso's work in all its stylistic and psychological diversity.

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cludes a stop for herring or pastries at that carriage-trade market. The main attractions are three house museums that distill the creative ferment that transformed Stockholm from 1890 to 1910. Touring the three, to which guidebooks puzzlingly give short shrift, will also surround a visitor with the city's most appealing landscapes—both urban and parklike.

THE tone of the tour is ideally set by a stop at the Royal Dramatic Theater, a white-and-gold Art Nouveau monument, built from 1901 to 1908, that seems to be a vision from Vienna. The building stands out like a beacon, facing both a major intersection and a busy canal; its bas reliefs, of a commedia dell'arte troupe and a Dionysian procession, are visible from as far away as the next islands. (Stockholm is built on fourteen islands, and is situated in an archipelago of about 25,000 of them.) I bought a ticket to a Molière play performed in Swedish in order to have a better look at the marble-and-gilt interior and to sit on the plush red seats. No, I didn't make it to the end, but I did feel as if I had spent time in the Gilded Age.

Two buildings down the canal, which forms one border of Ostermalm, is the 1910 Hotel Esplanade, whose curvaceous Art Nouveau façade and interior furnishings are largely intact. I can't vouch for the service: I stayed at the aptly named Grand Hotel, where I had to content myself with a beautiful gray-and-silver Gustavian room. Also near the theater is the first of the house museums, the Hallwyl, a palace designed by Isak Gustaf Clason and built in the 1890s for the Countess Wilhelmina von Hallwyl and her Swiss-born army-captain husband. The countess, a timber heiress, collected seemingly everything in sight—armor and swords and scabbards, French and Belgian tapestries, furniture, Chinese porcelain from uninteresting periods. Some of her acquisitions merited the money she doubtless doled out: superb early Meissen ceramics and, in an upstairs gallery next to a private gymnasium, a stunning Cranach of a nude Venus. I was most drawn, though, to the building itself, a concoction of Venetian arches and Spanish Gothic and Renaissance themes (and vast bathrooms), all expressed in an unmistakable Art Nouveau vocabulary.

A sympathetic guard told me that if I liked the house and wanted to see really good art, I should go to his favorite museum in Stockholm, one that few people know—the Thiel Gallery, another large house built at the turn of the century by a rich collector. This collector, though, Ernest Thiel, befriended the best artists of the time. Just take the bus outside, the guard said, to the end of Djurgården. He didn't know that the bus would leave me at the bridge, blocked by a women's marathon, and that I would spend the next hour getting to the museum by foot—the only choice that day.

LARS HALLÉN

English-style gardens at Waldemarsudde, Prince Eugen's mansion

The unplanned excursion turned out to be the pleasantest of my stay. Djurgården ("Animal Park") is the greenest of the city's islands, and one of the largest; residents treat the whole of it as their park. Swedish friends explained to me that every Stockholmer's goal is to leave the city as often as possible for a rustic retreat; they didn't tell me how easy it is for Stockholmers to fulfill their rural desires in the city—fishing for salmon just outside their office buildings (the city spends a fortune to keep the water clean), taking city hikes as a matter of course. Visitors will find renting a bicycle to be an easy alternative to the efficient public transportation; for someone unfamiliar with the streets and bridges, a car would be inconvenient, and would miss the point—Stockholmers seem to rely on foot and boat.

After mistaking several other Belle Epoque mansions for it, I reached the house, dramatically set on a far hill overlooking the water. The Thiel Gallery has cleaner lines than its neighboring mansions, as is logical: Thiel was a robber baron with avant-garde tastes. After making a fortune as a banker who speculated in railroads and shipbuilding, he married his children's governess; the couple ran an artistic salon in the house they built together. The sunniest room is Mrs. Thiel's white-and-yellow sewing room, with its many watercolors by Carl Larsson. Today Sweden's most popular artist, Larsson celebrated domestic life working in an Art Nouveau style that just skirts the saccharine.

The less sunny rooms are more interesting. The gallery that makes the Thiel worth a hike (on most days a bus does stop nearby) houses noteworthy pictures by Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Manet, and Vuillard. These are, however, rendered almost incidental by twelve big and important paintings by Edvard Munch. The artist picked the canvases especially for Thiel, his close friend, and the group—the largest assembly of Munch paintings in Sweden—is of special interest for its reflection of the friendship between artist and patron. One painting, *Despair*, is a precursor to *The Scream*; the only difference between them is the central figure on the hellish bridge, in this

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CAN YOU SPOT

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You've made the same mistake as stadium security—as
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In this case, innocent woman was directed into the
creating an awkward situation for all concerned. Remem
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IS 10

OLYMPUS

HOW THE BIG SHOTS TAKE

OLYMPUS

painting a hatted man seen in profile. There are also several works by August Strindberg, who painted throughout his writing career. His canvases, not surprisingly, are dark and stormy. A somber room at the top of the house's tower is filled with black-and-white etchings and drawings by Munch, and contains Friedrich Nietzsche's death mask as well.

The Thiels collected works by many other artists, including the most famous local painter of the time, Anders Zorn, and also by the makers of the Arts and Crafts furniture that is placed throughout the house. Some of the furniture is domestic and elegant, and some massive and deliberately primitive, as if copied from a Gauguin painting of Tahiti. The couple's fortunes and thus their patronage waned; by the 1920s Thiel was bankrupt, and his wife had divorced him. In 1924 he was forced to sell the house and his art to the state.

Thiel had originally wanted to buy a similarly dramatic site on Djurgården, closer to town. But Prince Eugen, the youngest son of King Oscar II, commissioned the same architect Thiel used, Ferdinand Boberg, to build a mansion on a site near the parcel Thiel had eyed. Prince Eugen was an accomplished painter of the National Romantic school, of which he was also a patron (he continued to collect Swedish art until the 1940s). His house, furnished with pretty Swedish rococo furniture and still filled with large fresh flower arrangements, as stipulated in his will, is more opulent than Thiel's, and in better taste; if the large adjoining gallery of art contains paintings that are less distinguished, the architecture is finer. Waldemarsudde, as the house is called, is especially lovely for its English-style gardens, which are adjacent to a big red-shingled eighteenth-century windmill. The garden benches face brick Arts and Crafts factories across the water.

COURTESY OF THE THIEL GALLERY

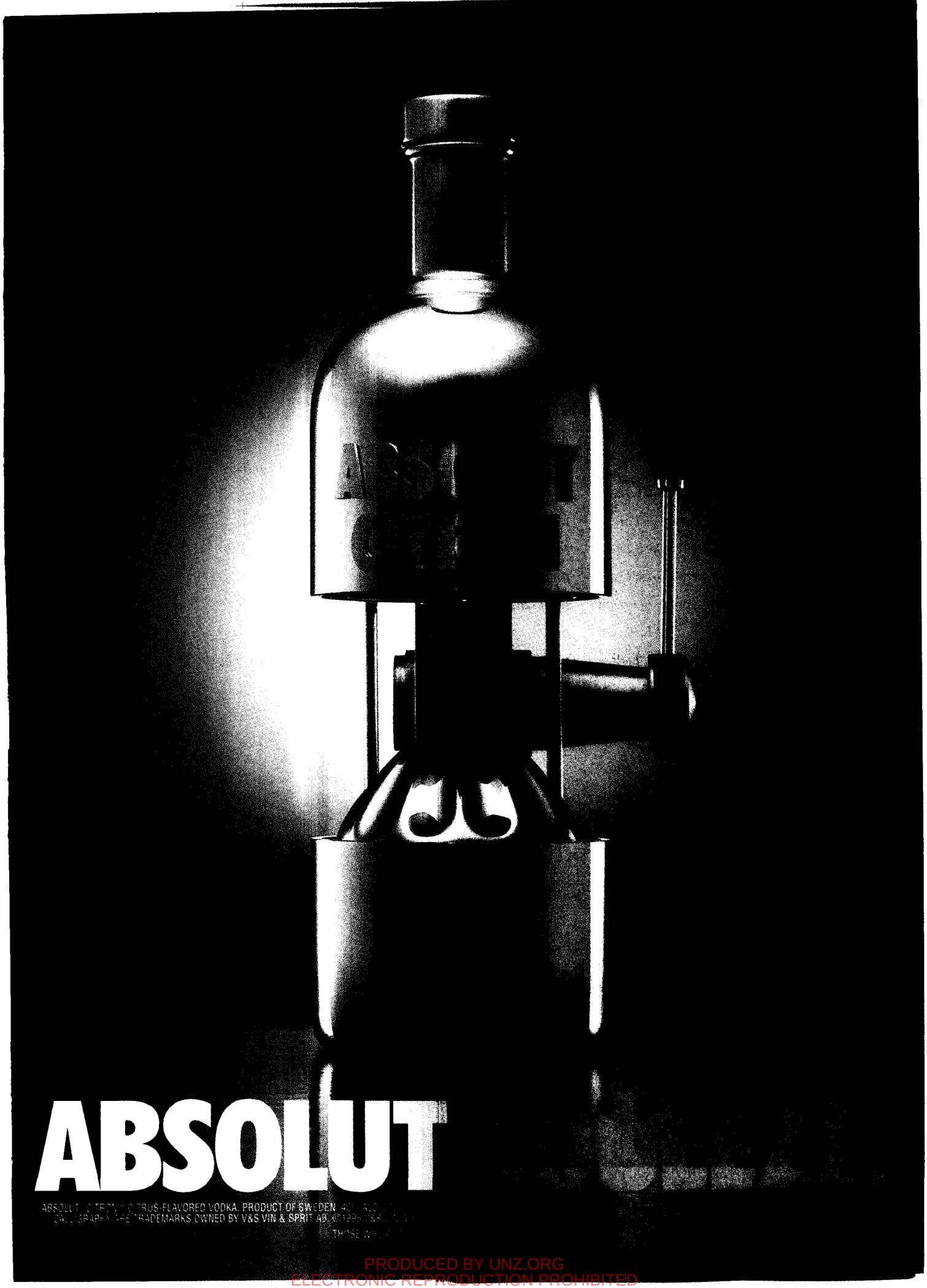
Paintings by Carl Larsson in the sewing room at the Thiel Gallery

WALKING along the embankment, I looked into the gardens of many houses from the same period, by turns grand and cottagelike. Returning toward town, I came to Skansen, a living museum encompassing more than a hundred farms, houses, churches, and shops from all over the country, reconstructed on site; a marketplace; and a zoo with aquarium. Tourists come to Djurgården to visit Skansen and to see the *Vasa*, a warship that sank about twenty minutes into its maiden voyage, in 1628. I was unmoved by the *Vasa*, despite its spectacular state of preservation, but enchanted by Skansen. Its founder, Artur Hazelius, began creating a miniature Sweden in the 1890s. Like all early ethnographers, Hazelius worried that the rise of industry would obliterate folk traditions. He wanted to preserve not just old buildings, costumes, tools, and artifacts but animals and plants, too, and so he stocked the old log barns with breeds from their places of origin.

As at Colonial Williamsburg and Old Sturbridge Village, people of all ages wearing period costumes suddenly come alongside one, acting out a scene. When I was there, young boys in nineteenth-century dress whisked off visitors to join them on a trip to America; at the grocer's, children in period dress who didn't have to playact their greed pushed in front of me to buy hard candies in paper cones. I didn't mind a bit—perhaps because before going to the grocer I had visited the period bakery and sampled nearly everything available, which that day included pretzels and puffy apricot turnovers, both made from the same strongly cardamom-scented yeast dough, and marvelous fresh vanilla-custard tarts in a star shape. (When I asked for some of the dark seeded bread, the white-suited baker rapped a loaf against a shelf: it was a painted rock.) These were the best pastries I tried in Stockholm—and I tried a lot.

Djurgården is its own island escape, but with thousands of islands for a visitor to choose from, the archipelago provides many other possible excursions. Of the several islands I visited, the one that left the strongest impression and seemed most in keeping with my itinerary was Fjaderholmen, an artists' colony twenty minutes by ferry from the terminal across from the Royal Dramatic Theater. The village, only a bit self-consciously quaint, offers paintings and various crafts, including blown glass, by local artisans—the successors to the nature-intoxicated artists who made the city look as it does. A big, pretty restaurant on the water, Fjaderholmarnas Krog, offers updated Swedish cuisine.

My dinner there, one of the last of my trip, was the meal I liked best. Even though I usually frown on modernized cuisine, preferring to sample the originals, I didn't mind the lightened fish and game dishes, given how stodgy the real thing could be. The several kinds of herring, fresh and brined and smoked, were luxuriously oily and powerfully flavored, and the wheaty crispbread was homemade. Before supper I walked around the island, with its rustic houses like modern log cabins, to watch the sunset. It couldn't have been much more than a mile around. By then that felt like nothing.



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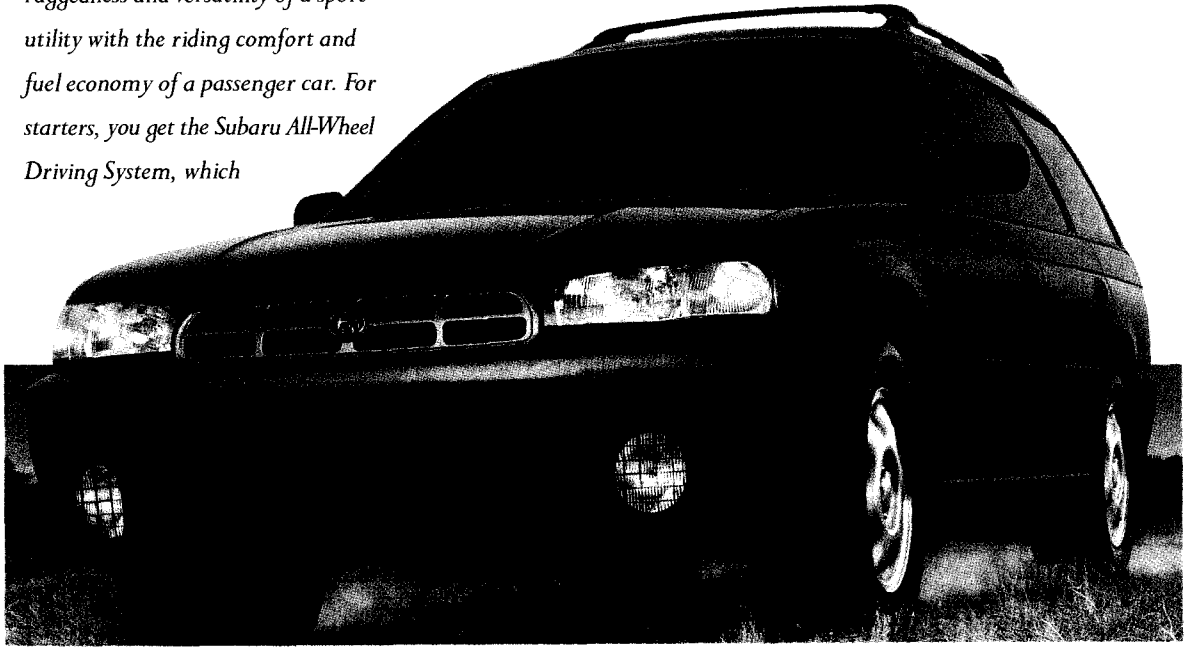


**Always wear seat belts. †Cargo space measured with seats upright. **All comparisons and figures represent 1996 model year. Ground clearance based on manufacturer's published specs.*

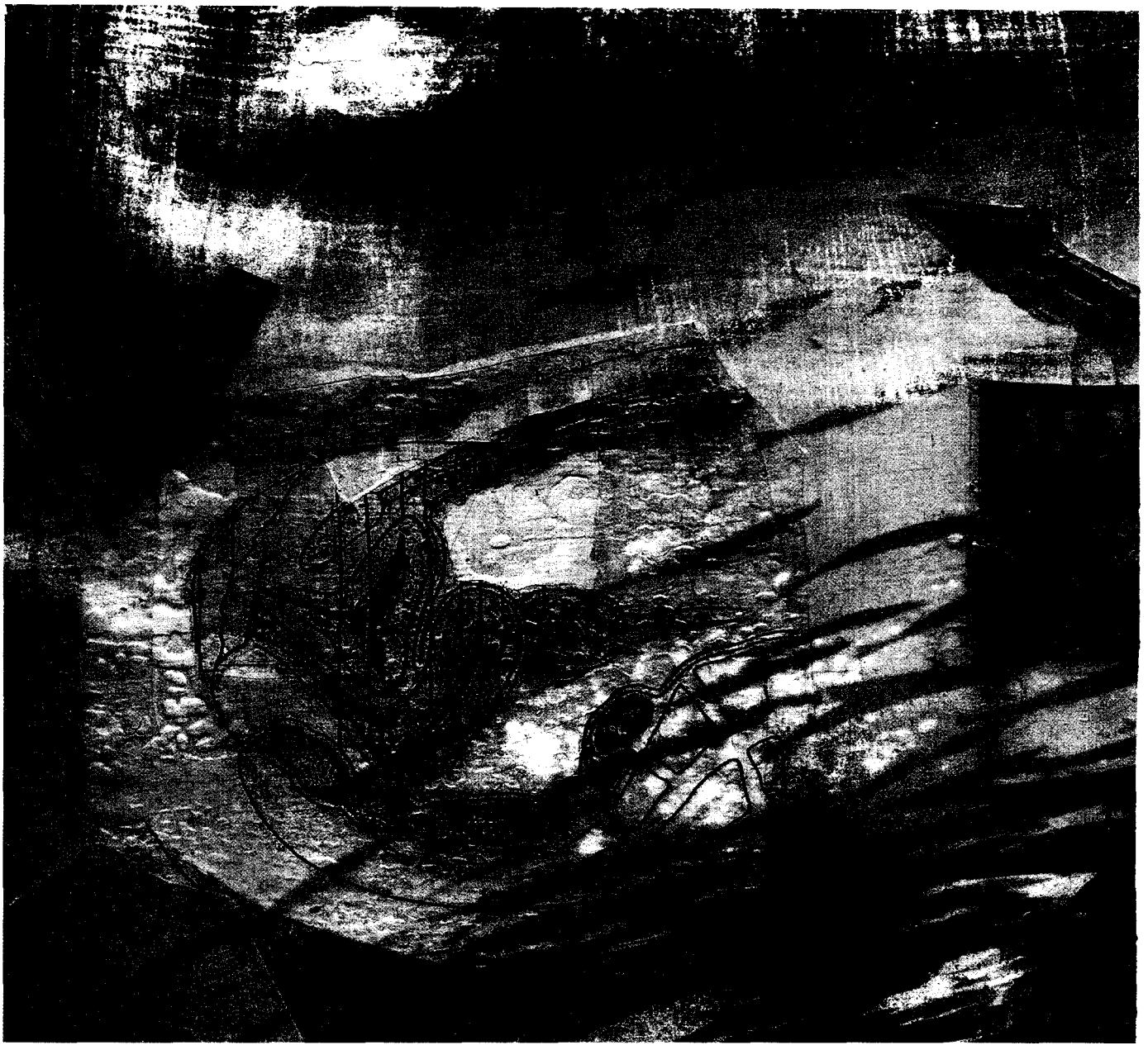
GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS ABOUT BREAST CANCER

by DAVID PLOTKIN, M.D.

Women are more alarmed than they need to be about the chances that they will develop breast cancer. But they are also more confident than they should be that the advances medicine has made in treating the disease and prolonging life mean that it can be cured

FEW things frighten a woman more than discovering a lump in one of her breasts. With good reason: breast cancer may transform a woman's breast into the vehicle of her death. It is twice as likely to be diagnosed in an American woman today as it was sixty years ago. And the treatment—surgery, usually followed by radiation and chemotherapy—is disfiguring, painful, and all too often unsuccessful.

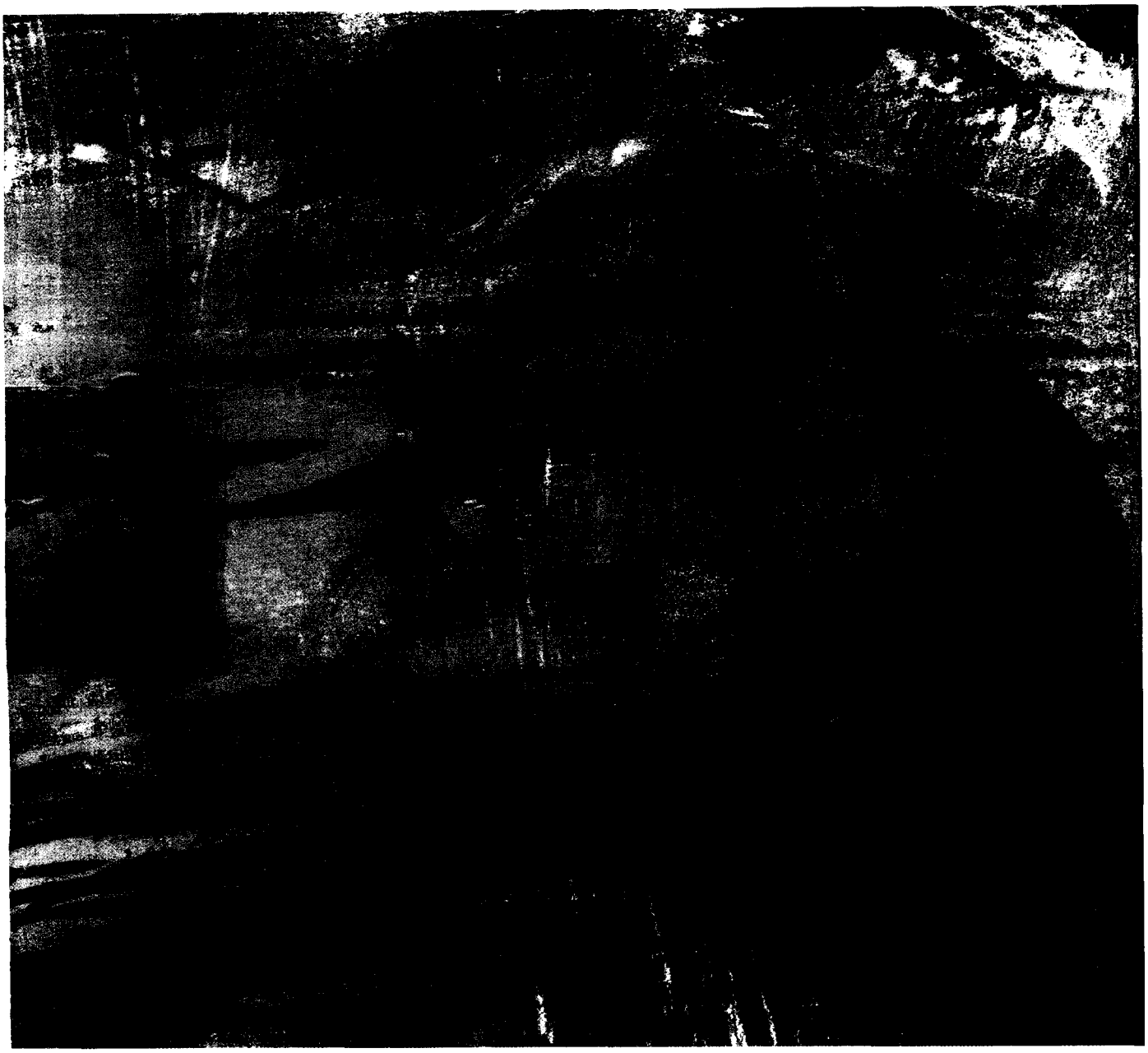
Illustration by Bina Altera



I have been researching and treating this disease for more than thirty-five years, a period in which the public's awareness of breast cancer has risen enormously. The disease has brought into being an entire industry of research organizations, charitable agencies, commercial ventures, and advocacy groups. Every new statistic is trumpeted in the media, and every encouraging research finding, no matter how tenuous, is held up as a potential breakthrough.

One result of this visibility has been a rise in public sympathy for victims of breast cancer and a concomitant rise in funding for breast-cancer research. But the growth in awareness has had another, less desirable result: a flood of often contradictory information that has led to public confusion. Paradoxically, women are both too anxious about their chances of developing breast cancer and too hopeful about our current approaches to diagnosing and treating the disease. They believe that breast cancer is an epidemic and that it is being cured. Unfortunately, both these beliefs arise from flawed reasoning—not by women but by the medical profession.

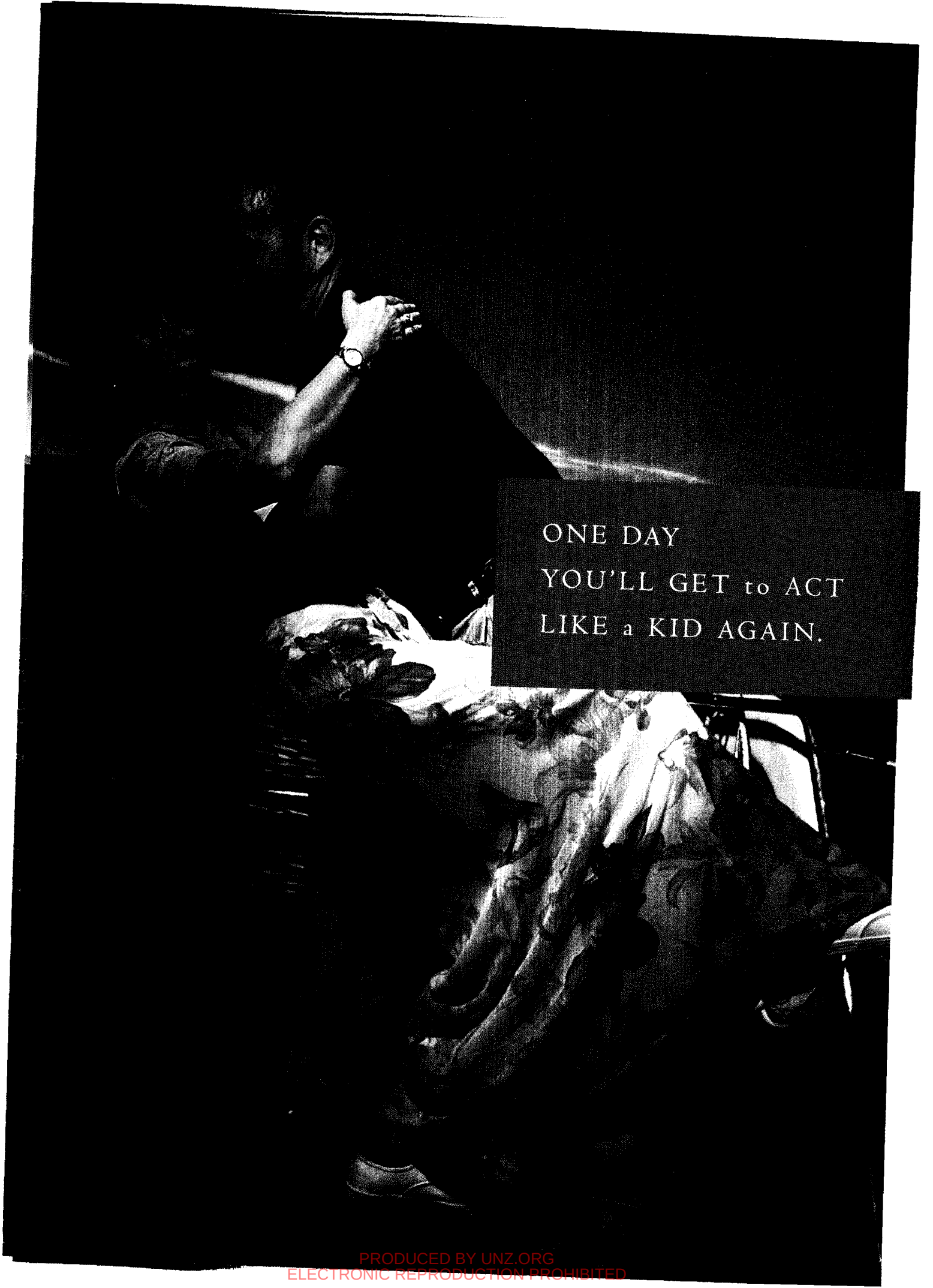
Two groups in the health-care profession are involved in the fight against cancer—indeed, against any kind of disease. The first works principally on the front lines, helping patients understand the therapies available and offering insight, treatment, and reassurance whenever possible. The second works mostly at scientific institutions, performing the methodical, frustratingly slow tasks associated with epidemiology, clinical trials, and laboratory analysis. As researchers, the members of the second group are necessarily less concerned with the fate of specific patients than



with understanding specific diseases and whether medicine is successfully combating them. To move forward, they must coldly distinguish between genuine advances and wishful thinking. I have spent my career as a member of the first group, although I have also spent years helping to conduct and analyze clinical trials. In what follows I have adopted the researcher's view of the big picture, while also summarizing the risks and benefits of the treatments now available to women with breast cancer—treatments the clinician in me still recommends and performs, though the researcher wonders how often they will be of meaningful help. Only by stepping back from the perspective of caring for individual patients can one hope to make clear what doctors mean (or should mean) when they use such broad words as "epidemic" and "cure."

IS BREAST CANCER AN EPIDEMIC?

MANY of my patients have conflicting images of their breasts. On the one hand, breasts are symbols of beauty, sexuality, and nurturing; on the other, they are troublesome organs that are increasingly likely to threaten women's lives. In the United States the likelihood that a woman will be found to have breast cancer has slowly and inexorably mounted since the 1930s, when some systematic data collection began. The increase in diagnoses, already a cause for concern, accelerated in the 1980s, growing by a rate of four percent a year. This year, according to the American Cancer Society, some 184,300 women will discover that they have the disease; another 44,300 will die of



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it. Of the women in whom cancer is diagnosed, 9,200 will not yet be forty—nearly twice the number of women under forty who were found to have breast cancer in 1970. The disease is now the leading cause of death for American women aged forty to fifty-five, and causes women to lose more years of productive life than any other disease. Numbers like these are why breast cancer is often called an epidemic.

To our grandparents, this picture would have seemed amazing. At the turn of the century cancer of the breast was a relatively unusual disease. What happened? Why does the incidence of breast cancer seem so much higher today?

Some of the increase is more apparent than real. Because women today are less likely to die young in childbirth or of infectious disease, they live long enough to develop diseases of middle and old age, breast cancer among them. And the recent jump in the number of breast-cancer victims under fifty is almost wholly due to the concurrent jump in the number of women in that age group, caused by the Baby Boom. A third reason for the increase in diagnoses of breast cancer is the growing use of mammography, a technique that uses x-rays to examine the breast. With mammography doctors catch many cancer cases earlier than they otherwise would have—and some cases that would never have been caught at all. The technique surged in popularity in the 1980s, and accounts for much of the recent spurt in diagnoses. (Now that mammography is routine, the rate of increase in diagnoses has slowed.)

At the same time, most experts in medical statistics believe that these factors do not explain *all* of the rise. Even when greater longevity, the population bulge, and the introduction of mammography are taken into account, a real, underlying increase remains. Minus those three factors, the chance that a woman will be found to have breast cancer has been growing steadily for decades, at roughly one percent a year.

What lies behind this rise? Although there is not enough evidence to say with certainty, an increasing number of observers have come to believe that the emergence of breast cancer as a widespread health problem is tied to the extraordinary transformations in women's lives. Coupled with better nutrition, the expansion of opportunities for women, especially in the industrialized West, altered not only women's lives but also their bodies, and especially their cycles of reproductive hormones—apparently making them more susceptible to certain cancers.

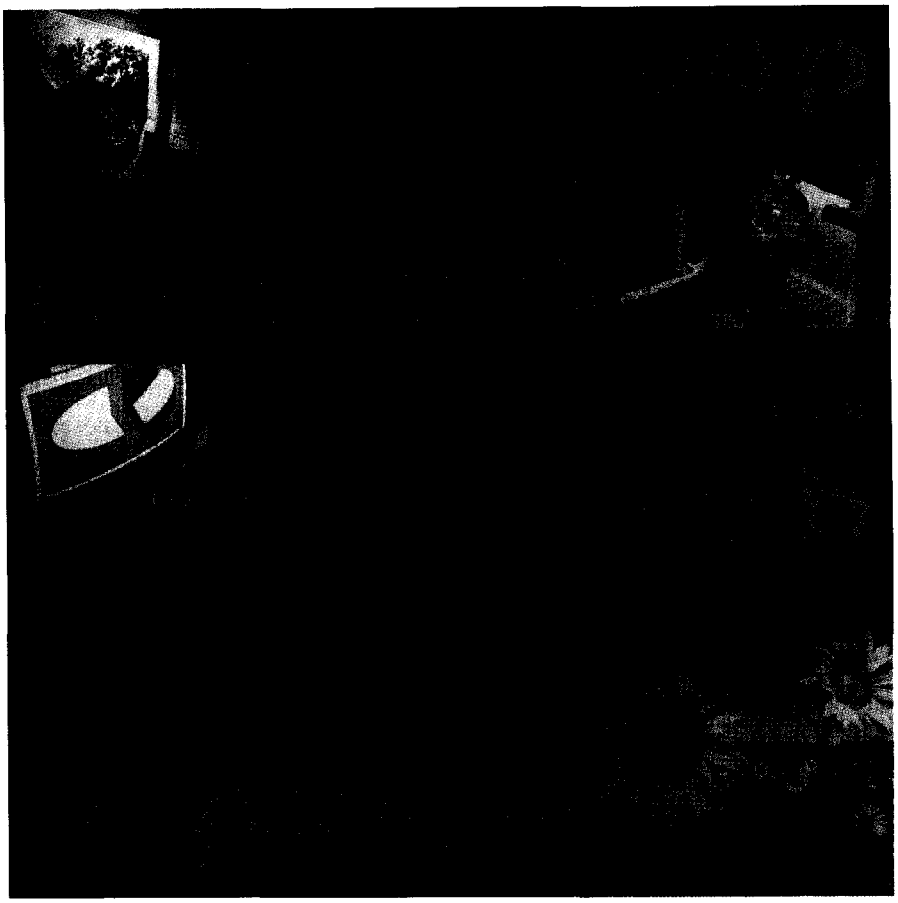
For most of human history menarche, the age of first menstruation, usually occurred in the late teens. (This is one reason that previous generations saw less early-teenage pregnancy—fewer adolescents were physiologically capable of having babies.) Once fecund, women of past millennia quickly became pregnant with the first of perhaps half a dozen children, each of whom they breast-fed for an extended period—a practice that regularly stops the menstrual cycle. If they survived to their mid-thirties, they were aged in appearance and probably post-menopausal; their brutal living conditions usually did not permit them to live much longer. Late menarche, multiple pregnancies, long nursing times, early menopause—all these combined to make women of the past menstruate much less often than their modern counterparts. Many women in the past may have ovulated only twenty times in their entire lives.

This grim picture changed only recently. Not until modern times has a large percentage of humankind been able to obtain a continuous supply of nutritious food and potable water or been able to control infectious disease. The average age of menarche has fallen to twelve in Western industrialized nations. Meanwhile, the age of first marriage has risen. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, it now averages twenty-four for women in this country; many educated and affluent women do not marry until their thirties, partly because of the increased opportunities to have careers outside the home. Pregnancy, too, has become much less common, as lost working time drives up the cost of having babies. Marriages produce an average of two children, which women nurse briefly if at all. And menopause does not occur until age fifty or later. Women today are thus exposed to reproductive hormones over a much longer span than in the past. They may have 300 to 400 periods—fifteen to twenty times as many as their ancestors had, exposing their breasts to historically unprecedented numbers of estrogen-progesterone cycles.

Estrogen and progesterone, like aspirin, have such familiar-sounding names that people often don't realize how powerful their effects are. Among these effects is the multiplication of cells within the breast. With repeated menstrual cycles that are rarely interrupted by full-term pregnancy, the number of cells in some parts of the breast can increase by a factor of a hundred or even more. If only because of the simple increase in number, this constantly repeated cellular multiplication is believed to increase the likelihood of genetic accidents. Most cancers are believed to arise from such accidents, and so the strong suspicion is that repeated menstruation is a precursor to cancer of the breast.

If the improvements in women's lives have indirectly promoted breast cancer, then it is unhelpful to call the growth in its incidence an epidemic. In medical terms an epidemic is the sudden outbreak of a generally rare condition, such as the deadly spread of cholera in a city with contaminated water, and should be stopped by striking at its source—in this example the contaminated water. The "epidemic" of breast cancer, in contrast, may be an unwanted accompaniment to what most Americans view as social and material progress. If this suspicion is true, it is obviously unacceptable to eliminate the epidemic's cause.

Equally important, the increase in breast cancer does not resemble other epidemics. Although the likelihood that a woman will be found to have the disease has climbed, the likelihood that it will end her life has not. After adjustments for today's longer life-span and the population bulge associ-



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Electricity

The power to make life better

ated with the Baby Boom, the proportion of women who are killed every year by breast cancer—24.7 to 27.6 per 100,000—has remained little changed since the 1930s. Women face an ever-increasing risk of being discovered to have breast cancer, then—but not of dying from it. It is highly unusual, to say the least, for a nationwide epidemic of a fatal disease not to affect the death rate.

This odd and even paradoxical situation has sown much confusion and fear. Breast cancer is a major public-health concern; it kills 0.04 percent of all American women yearly. But it is important for women to recognize that other conditions, especially the various forms of cardiovascular disease and, for smokers, lung cancer, are much more likely to claim their lives. Unfortunately, the enormous publicity accorded the rise in breast-cancer incidence has obscured the fact that the disease is not the leading killer of women. Also, the publicity usually obscures the fact that the majority of women who die of the disease are elderly. In a survey conducted by three researchers at the Dartmouth Center for the Evaluative Clinical Sciences and published in May of last year in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, the median estimate female Baby Boomers gave of their chance of dying of breast cancer within a decade was 10 percent. A substantial minority thought the risk was 30 percent or more. In fact, the likelihood that a woman in her forties will die of breast cancer in the next ten years of her life is on the order of 0.4 percent.

In my view, the medical profession, too, has lost perspective. If a woman's chances of dying of breast cancer are little changed despite a huge rise in the incidence of the disease, there are two possible explanations. First, we could be making progress. To go on from the current hypothesis: as women's changing hormonal environment slowly drove up the number of breast-cancer cases, our mastery of the disease could have grown at such a rate that, year after year, the increase in cures precisely canceled out the increase in incidence, leaving the overall death rate unaffected. When my colleagues claim that we are curing breast cancer, they are implicitly endorsing this view. And why not? When physicians treat more cases of a disease while observing the same number of deaths, that means a smaller percentage of their patients are dying.

The second possible explanation is that the change in women's hormonal environment is creating a surge in slow-growing, less-aggressive forms of breast cancer. Because this "new" breast cancer, if it is indeed responsible for the rise in diagnosed cases, is a much less dangerous disease than the breast cancer that was found before, in many cases it would not need treatment beyond excising the primary tumor. The rise in incidence would not be matched by a rise in breast-cancer mortality, because women would die first of other causes. The apparent good news about the decline in the proportion of fatal cases would in fact be masking the unchanged prevalence of the "old" breast cancer: a persistent public-health problem that is just as likely to kill women now as it was sixty years ago. I believe this is just what we are seeing.

BREAST-CANCER BASICS

FEMALE breasts are one of the most variable parts of the human anatomy. Evolved from sweat glands, they are designed to provide milk for infants through a system of ducts and lobules. The ducts are small tubes that run several inches back from the nipple to the milk-producing lobules, which stick out from the ducts like clusters of tiny grapes. Both are enveloped by fat and connective tissue, which are contained within a sac of skin shaped roughly like a teardrop. The whole assembly changes dramatically in size, shape, and constitution during the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, breast-feeding, and menopause. Not only do breasts vary from woman to woman but each woman's breasts continue to change throughout her life.

At any given time a third to a half of all Western women have some kind of breast problem, although most are not particularly concerned about the symptoms—nor need they be. The symptoms frequently include swelling and aching before menstrual flow; women may feel their breasts engorge and grow tender. If their breasts become lumpier, however, this may be owing to cysts—fluid-filled balloon-like sacs within the breast. Or the lumps may be solid, nodular clumps of overgrown breast-duct cells, known generically to doctors as mammary dysplasia or , the most widely used term, fibrocystic disease. These conditions are benign—a term doctors use to mean "not cancerous." ("Benign" does

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EADS TO GLINKA

it said on one of the volumes of
the red encyclopedia in the bedroom
in Buffalo, defining an
incantatory spectrum. Who
was Eads? or should it be, What are
eads? or keats? And Glinka? Shopping bag lady
of the Grand Concourse, everybody knows Glinka?
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of a European state?
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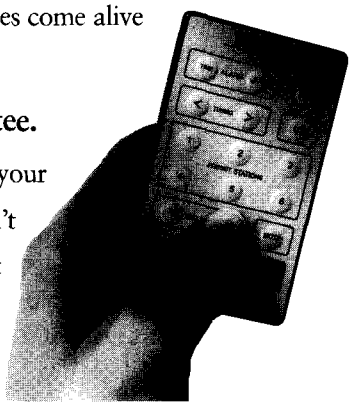

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not mean "not painful" or "not harmful." Many benign conditions should be treated.)

If much of the breast is palpably lumpy, as is often the case, the diagnosis is usually "benign." Matters are less clear when the problem is in a small area: "dominant mass" is the term used by most doctors for a swelling that stands out sharply. In such a case a biopsy is almost routinely recommended. Sometimes the biopsy involves nothing more than extracting a sample from the breast with a needle, but the surgeon may also remove the entire lump. Afterward, the tissue is examined in a laboratory. Most of the time the news is reassuring; two thirds to four fifths of all biopsies reveal that the abnormality is not malignant. (Women in their forties are more likely than older women to have negative biopsies, because mammograms of their naturally lumpier breasts are harder to interpret.) Yet the specter of breast cancer remains—many of these "benign" conditions are statistically linked with the disease.

Breast cancer is as diverse as the breast itself, appearing in many different guises. Some cancers seem to erupt out of ordinary breast tissue with an awesome virulence, spreading rapidly throughout the body. When viewed under a microscope, the cells in these cancers almost always bear no resemblance to ordinary duct or lobule cells—they have lost all the specialized characteristics that differentiate cells in the breast from cells in other parts of the body. "Poorly differentiated" malignancies, as pathologists refer to them, are usually bad news, no matter what we bring to bear therapeutically.

Fortunately, these poorly differentiated, clinically virulent cancers are relatively uncommon. Much more often—perhaps in half of all breast-cancer cases—pathologists see malignancies that still bear some of the characteristics of normal breast tissue. These "moderately differentiated" tumors have a wide range of outcomes, though the prognosis for the patient is generally more favorable. A substantial number of women with moderately differentiated tumors will survive for years after treatment—even decades. In most cases these tumors evolve more slowly than their poorly differentiated cousins, probably taking years to become detectable. "Well-differentiated" tumors, a less common form, are more indolent still. Indeed, pathologists sometimes have trouble ascertaining whether they are truly malignant; women have a good chance of surviving them.

In recent years doctors have increasingly encountered a fourth, somewhat different type of breast tumor: *in situ* cancer. Twenty years ago *in situ* tumors made up no more than one or two percent of all breast-cancer cases. Today the figure is 10 percent or more, a five- to ten-fold increase. *In situ* tumors are usually small—half an inch or less across—and confined to the ducts and lobules of the breast. When diagnosed, these tumors usually appear not to have invaded the connective tissue or spread elsewhere in the body; like well-differentiated tumors, *in situ* tumors are not likely to be fatal.

I must caution that breast-cancer characterization remains an inexact science. The categories themselves are fuzzy. Well-differentiated and *in situ* tumors can occasionally grow fast and develop into serious, even fatal, disease; some poorly differentiated tumors respond amazingly well to treatment. The uncertainty is partly due to a lack of absolute procedures for distinguishing among the three classifications. Often a tumor is classified as poorly differentiated by one pathologist and moderately differentiated by another. Neither doctor could be accused of making a mistake.

More important, the degree of differentiation does not by itself describe the malevolence of a tumor. It is important to know too if the tumor cells respond to estrogen and progesterone—that is, whether they retain the biochemical equipment to link up physically with molecules of these hormones. (Given the apparent role of hormones in promoting the disease, their significance in its outcome is unsurprising.) Up to two thirds of all breast tumors have enough sensitivity to reproductive hormones to be, in the jargon, estrogen- or progesterone-receptor-positive; such tumors tend to grow relatively slowly and can be treated by modifying a woman's hormonal environment, either with drugs or (rarely) by removing the ovaries. Estrogen- or progesterone-receptor-negative tumors generally have poorer outcomes.

Even when such complicating factors are considered, though, the tumor's degree of differentiation is a reasonably accurate approximation of its virulence. The less resemblance cancer cells bear to the tissue that spawned them, the worse the prognosis for the patient.

Notwithstanding the myriad forms in which breast cancer presents itself, researchers believe that at a fundamental level all breast cancers are similar. In their view, breast cancer, like other cancers, is the result of accidental changes in the genetic makeup of a cell—mutations. When the cell reproduces, it passes on its altered DNA. It begins to reproduce independently, regardless of the body's needs—the defining characteristic of cancer. Cells depend on nutrients and oxygen from the bloodstream. Under ordinary circumstances aberrant, independently growing cells would outpace the available blood supply by the time they had formed a blob of tissue one or two millimeters in diameter; they would then die from a lack of oxygen and food. Instead cancer cells—by means that remain frustratingly unclear—create their own network of blood vessels to secure necessary nutrients. Once this circulatory system is established, the nascent tumor can continue to grow at its own pace. Eventually a discrete mass of aberrant cells becomes identifiable, either as a denser area on a mammogram or as a lump detectable by touch.

As the cancer progresses, it can invade the surrounding tissue and spread throughout the body in the familiar and frightening process known as metastasis. Metastasis is almost always how breast cancer kills its victims. Left untreated, as it generally was in previous centuries, the original, or primary, tumor usually grows very large, sometimes to the

size of a grapefruit. Eventually it begins to outstrip its self-generated blood supply; portions of the tumor die, leading to ulceration of the breast surface and eventual death from infection, hemorrhage, or both. Today this peril is avoided with relative ease by removing the tumor. The metastases are quite another problem. As it grows, the primary tumor sheds cancer cells into its self-generated network of blood vessels. Spreading through the body, these cells can lodge in almost any vital organ, creating a second tumor—or a third, or a fourth. Like the primary tumor, the new tumors create their own blood supply, each one siphoning off nutrients from the body to feed its expansion. When the metastases reach an appreciable aggregate size—a total tumor load of two pounds or so, scattered throughout the body—the struggle for life is usually over.

From an intellectual point of view, metastasis is an amazing phenomenon. If a surgeon inserted a microscopic clump of normal cells from a woman's breast into another organ, the body's defense systems would wipe out the misplaced normal cells almost instantly. Yet cancer cells that split off from the main tumor and lodge elsewhere in the body not only survive but can grow exuberantly. For this reason most doctors believe that the best method for stopping breast cancer is to detect it before it has spread. Find the problem while it is still small and isolated—that is the hope.

The best method for early clinical detection of breast cancer is mammography. The American Cancer Society advises women aged forty to forty-nine to have mammograms every one to two years, and women aged fifty and over to have them annually. Women with any potential cancer symptoms, such as suspicious lumpiness of the breast, should see their doctor immediately.

We have been trying to treat breast cancer aggressively for decades. Many physicians now believe that the long effort to detect and control this disease is meeting with success. I shall argue otherwise. Despite the hopes pinned on mammography, it has had little impact on women's health—indeed, it may have had none. And although we have taken some important steps forward in our treatment of breast cancer once it has been diagnosed—steps that can add years to a woman's life—we are still far from curing the disease.

DOES MAMMOGRAPHY HELP?

FINDING breast cancer as early as possible seems to be a great idea, like trying to diagnose high blood pressure before it damages the heart or the kidneys. And mammograms can occasionally detect tumors as small as an eighth of an inch across, whereas the lower limit for tu-

THE ALL NEW NISSAN PATHFINDER

GORED BY CAPE BUFFALO OR TORN TO SHREDS BY LIONS?

TANZANIA SAYS: "THE CHOICE IS YOURS!"

As any travel agent will tell you, Tanzania offers safari enthusiasts an incredible array of wildlife: Cape buffalo roam in giant herds. Hippos enjoy midday dips in cool water holes. Lions can be seen grooming themselves in the sun. What those vacation vendors neglect to say, however, or at least hide in very small type that can't be read, is that many of those animals have a distinct fondness for khaki. Still, we couldn't resist the call of Tanzania's world-famous game reserves, and, with our all new Pathfinder's doors securely locked, recently embarked on a driving adventure along the country's Northern Circuit. . . . . .

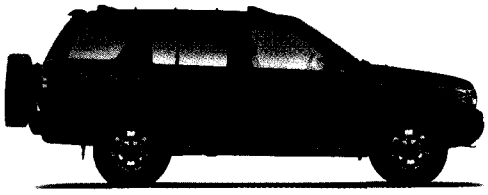
TANZANIA

ONE AFTERNOON, bored by prehistoric life, an ancient ancestor of man left his cave to view some of the wild animals that lived nearby. What was to be history's first wildlife safari, however, went a bit awry and, 1.7 million years later, anthropologists found themselves dusting off the well-preserved skull of *Zinjanthropus boisei*, Tanzania's first safari victim.

While the intervening millennia have done little to diminish the local animal population's carnivorous impulses, the Pathfinder's nimble handling and powerful acceleration make visiting Tanzania a lot safer for present-day humans than it was for cavemen. And it was with our windows tightly rolled up that we departed for the Northern Circuit, a route that offers, in one fell swoop, Lake Manyara National Park, the Ngorongoro Crater Conservation Area and legendary Serengeti National Park.

Our first stop was Lake Manyara National Park, located 130 dirt-covered kilometers west of Arusha in the Great Rift Valley. Characteristic of Tanzanian vehicular travel, this drive is a trade-off between speed and tire-swallowing potholes, and it was only thanks to our vehicle's rugged suspension that we reached the park's main gate with all our fillings still affixed to our molars. (On a positive note, traffic density along this road is low, so collisions are rare.) Once one of the most popular hunting areas in Tanzania, Lake Manyara was named a national park in 1960, and today offers an incredible amount of wildlife and geographical diversity. Of particular interest were the thousands of flamingos that inhabit the lake, a herd of hippos that entertained us with wallowing and honking, and a large troop of baboons, whose foray onto the park's road suggested a complete disregard for traffic etiquette.

Several days later – with no reported casualties – we visited Stop #2 on the Northern Circuit: The (tongue-twisting) Ngorongoro Crater Conservation Area. Formed 2.5 million years ago by



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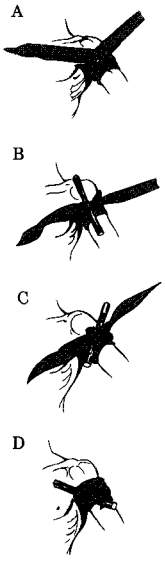
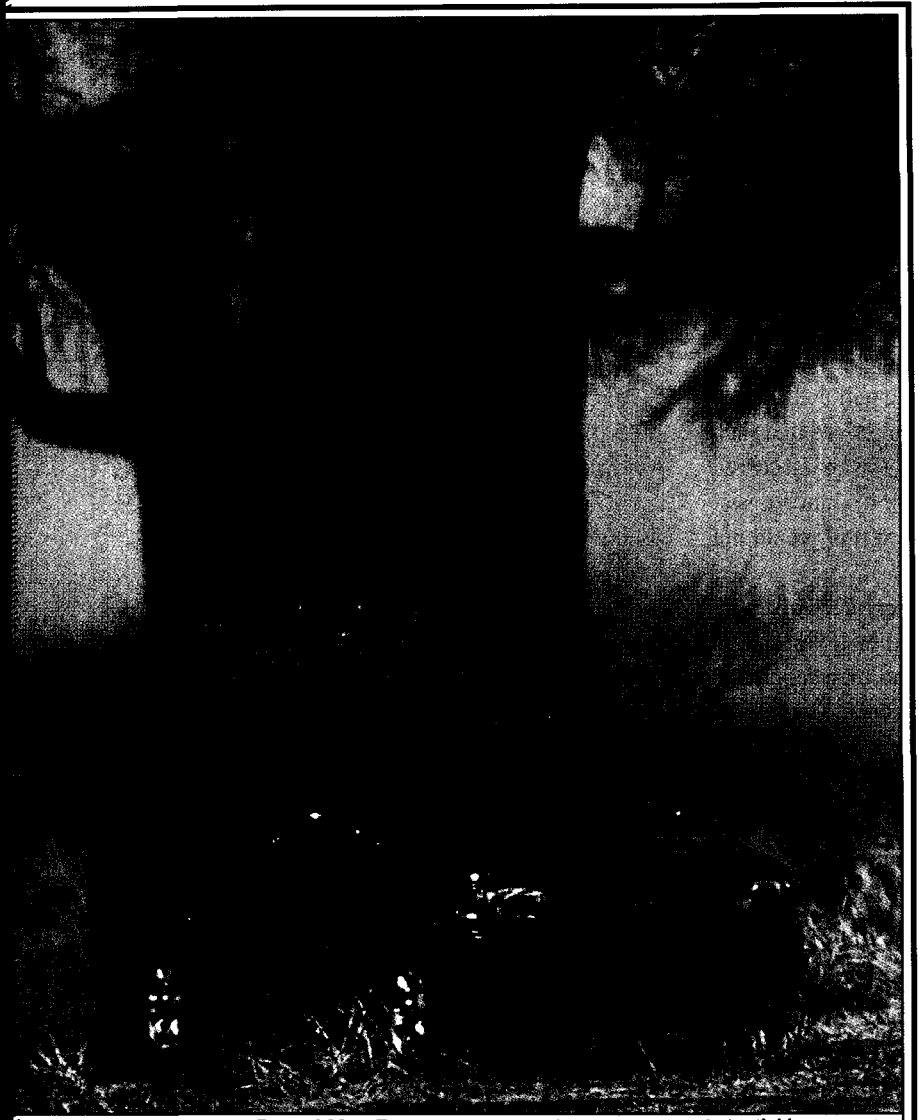


FASHIONING A TOURNIQUET



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the collapse of an enormous volcano, the crater is as remarkable for its physical beauty as for its wildlife, and, indeed, it is the jaded geologist who stands unimpressed at the rim of this 20,000-meter caldera. Less impressive is the steep, rough, narrow, winding and sorry excuse for a road that descends into the crater, but that's what low-range 4WD is for. At last count, there were over 30,000 animals living within Ngorongoro's walls (including four separate prides of lions), so bring lots of film and stay in your vehicle.

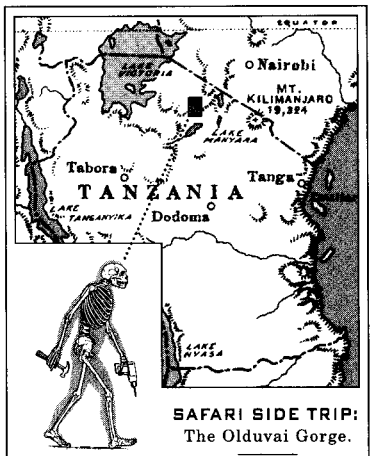
Last stop (STILL ALIVE!) was Serengeti National Park. At 14,763 square kilometers, this granddaddy of reserves is larger than Connecticut, but with a lot fewer preppies. (Just kidding, blue-blooded buddies!) As our visit coincided with the annual Serengeti Migration, we witnessed millions of hoofed animals brave hazardous terrain and hungry carnivores in search of prime grazing land. Seeing wildebeest attempting to cross swollen rivers only to be snatched by hungry crocodiles definitely leaves one marveling at the ominous process of nature. And, of course, being thankful one's not a wildebeest.

Leaving Tanzania with our new Pathfinder intact and no deep punctures to our bodies, we can highly recommend driving Tanzania's Northern Circuit yourself. Just plan your itinerary carefully, bring a good camera and don't try feeding the lions.

After all, you'll need those hands to drive.

A KAISER'S BIRTHDAY

For his birthday, Germany's future Kaiser William II received Mt. Kilimanjaro as a gift from his grandmother, Queen Victoria. The young sprout was unable to hold back his tears of disappointment, however, as he had actually wanted a pony . . . . . .



SAFARI SIDE TRIP: The Olduvai Gorge.

Despite the country's large number of man-eating carnivores, Tanzania is thought by anthropologists to be the cradle of mankind. It was near the Ngorongoro Crater, in fact, that Dr. Leakey discovered the bones of *Homo Habilis*. (Known as "Handy Man" for his use of primitive tools and his ability to fix things around the cave.) . . . . . .

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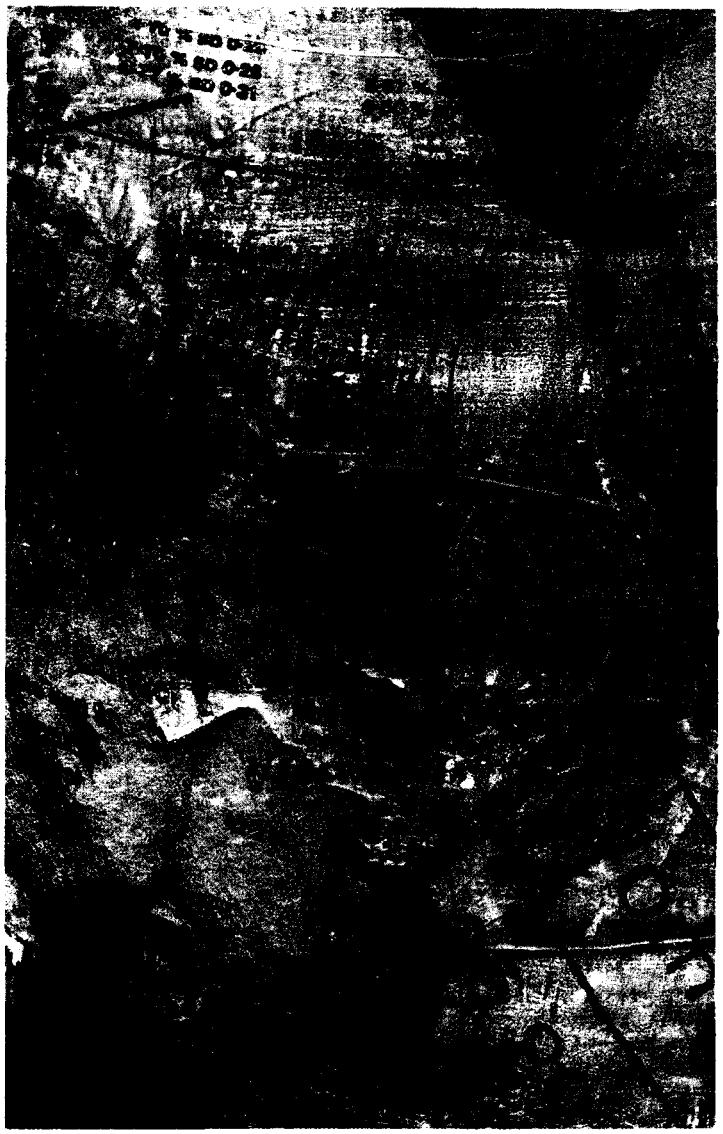
mors diagnosable by palpation (examining the breast manually) is about half an inch across. Yet one would like to be sure that this difference actually translates into a higher likelihood that treatment will be successful. An official nationwide mammography program would be a huge commitment: 51.5 million American women are aged forty or above. And one must bear in mind the cost of needless medical procedures generated by the huge number of false-positive mammograms—two to four false positives for every true positive, according to some measures. (A false positive shows a mass or lump that proves after further testing not to be cancerous.) We continue to consider creating a national screening program, but I believe it has never been proved that such a program would, on balance, be beneficial—even if it served the secondary purpose of bringing into the health-care system women who otherwise could not afford it or would not see a doctor frequently.

To prove the value of mammography scientifically is more difficult than it might seem. In some studies investigators ask women to volunteer for screening, and then report the number of breast-cancer cases and the percentage of women who survive five years after diagnosis. This figure is compared with the percentage in the population at large. In these studies researchers often go to considerable trouble to eliminate potential sources of confusion. For example, they may try to match by age the women undergoing regular mammography with other women. Or they may match by race or socioeconomic class. No matter how hard researchers try, though, such studies remain susceptible to three of the most common sources of bias in medical research.

Mammography may find a tumor as early as two years before it could have been detected by palpation. Let us, however, consider a hypothetical case in which the cancer has already spread to other parts of the body by the time it is discovered, and the woman goes to her grave on exactly the same day she would have if the tumor had been discovered later. In that case the sole effect of early detection has been to stretch out the time in which the woman bears the knowledge of her condition. But that is not how the woman would appear statistically if she had happened to become part of a research study. Pushing back the date of first diagnosis would increase the interval between diagnosis and death, apparently lengthening her survival. Statisticians call this effect "lead-time bias." Although nothing has actually changed, a woman who would have died, say, three years after treatment now dies five to six years after treatment—manufacturing an apparent victory for medicine.

A second problem with measuring the benefits of mammography is known as "length bias." Women typically have mammograms every year or every other year. Any cancers that are found between mammograms will be detected by palpation—very possibly by the woman herself. Such tumors are likely to be fast-growing; indeed, their rapid onset



often explains why they were not picked up by the previous mammogram. The more aggressive tumors tend not to be diagnosed mammographically, and thus the tumors that are discovered by mammograms are often less dangerous. Mammography will be made to look good in a study comparing the survival rate of women whose tumors were diagnosed by mammography with that of women whose tumors were diagnosed by palpation, because the tumors discovered by mammography tend to be those that grow relatively slowly and thus take longer to kill patients.

The third and most important problem is "selection bias." This occurs when researchers measure the effect of a treatment on a group of people without realizing that those people are different from the general population. The risks that selection bias will occur are high, because women who participate in medical experiments are often not like the general population. Researchers typically work in teaching hospitals and thus draw their subjects from the patients who frequent them. These people may be more affluent than most

Americans, and thus more prone to diseases of affluence. Or they may be more worried about their health, and thus more likely to seek expert medical care. In either case, the results of a test on such a select group can be misleading.

Many researchers agree that lead-time, length, and selection biases may flaw the optimistic accounts of the efficacy of mammography that have appeared in the scientific press and the popular media. Nonetheless, they support the idea of routinely screening women. The principal reason is that benefits from mammography have been observed in a special kind of study known as a prospective randomized clinical trial. In such a trial researchers randomly divide large numbers of volunteers into two groups at the outset (prospectively): a control group, which receives ordinary medical care; and a test group, which receives the medication or procedure under scrutiny. After a given period of time the two groups are compared. Properly conducted, such trials avoid all three kinds of bias. Even prospective randomized clinical trials have their pitfalls, though, because doctors can't control the actions of their patients. Members of the test group may fail to take their medicine or to show up for their medical procedures, and members of the control group may seek out a drug or procedure they are not supposed to have. As hard as researchers may try to ascertain levels of compliance, misclassification of a certain number of participants is inevitable. In addition, the medical care provided at research centers, which often conduct clinical trials, may not be representative of the care received by most people.

Nonetheless, by ensuring from the beginning that the test group and the control group are statistically similar and by tracking everyone in both groups, these trials can produce data that are as solid as medical research gets. And several big prospective randomized clinical trials have reported that women who regularly undergo mammography have, roughly speaking, 25 to 30 percent less chance of dying from breast cancer in the decade after initial screening than women who are not screened. Most breast-cancer specialists thus endorse mammography.

In fact the evidence from these trials is weaker than it sounds. In April of last year an article in *Cancer* summarized all eight of the major mammography trials that have been conducted to date. Six of the trials saw no significant decreases in breast-cancer mortality as a result of mammography. "Significant," an important term, means that statistical tests indicate that the effect is probably not due to chance. Also, the two significant clinical trials were the first ones completed. "Should the early trials be accepted as the gold standard and the later ones dismissed as somehow incompetent?" Charles J. Wright, of the University of British Columbia, and C. Barber Mueller, of McMaster University, asked in *The Lancet* last July. "Surely not, in view of the increasing rigour of trial design over the past 30 years and the vast improvement in quality of mammography." Indeed, the two earliest trials have serious potential shortcomings. Explaining these shortcomings involves delving still further into technical details; some readers may wish to skip the next section of this article entirely. The gist of my argument is that the benefits of frequent mammography as opposed to palpation performed during regular checkups and also by a woman herself are not well established; if they do exist, they are not as great as many women hope.

STATISTICAL TROUBLES

THE more important historically of the two trials that showed significant benefits is known as the HIP trial, after the Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York, the health-maintenance organization from which the researchers gathered participants. A classic of medical research, the HIP trial enrolled 60,696 patients from 1963 to 1966 and followed them for as long as eighteen years. In 1988 two of its principal investigators, Sam Shapiro and Philip Strax, won the Charles F. Kettering Prize for outstanding cancer research, both because the trial was one of the earliest large-scale attempts to test a preventive health measure and because it showed that periodic mammography reduced breast-cancer mortality by 30 percent over a ten-year period.

Notwithstanding the accolades awarded to this pioneering effort, it suffered from methodological weaknesses. In clinical trials, as I have said, the subjects should be randomly distributed between the test group (in this case women who received annual mammograms and clinical breast examinations) and the control group (women who received ordinary medical care from their own doctors). Experimenters always fear that they may introduce bias by inadvertently including or excluding the wrong people. The HIP trial demonstrates why they worry.

In this experiment the researchers assigned women to the test and control groups alternately in order of enlisting, a process intended to produce groups of equal size and composition. After assigning a woman to the test group the researchers made two simple determinations: Was she pregnant? Had she had breast cancer? If the answer to either of these was yes, Shapiro and Strax made the woman ineligible for the test group. They did not, of course, want to x-ray pregnant women. Nor did they think it a good idea to include women with breast cancer, because administering mammograms to women who had already been treated for the disease would not be a proper test of mammography for the purposes of the study. The test group of 30,131 women thus wound up with 434 fewer subjects than the control group of 30,565 women.

Shapiro and Strax gave the women in the test group annual mammograms and breast examinations for as long as five years. They then counted up the number in each group who died of breast cancer within ten years and compared the two figures. Because 147 died in the test group and 193 died in the control group, Shapiro and Strax concluded that mammography was beneficial. But was it? The researchers themselves attributed the "higher proportion" of the benefit, at least in the first five years, to clinical breast examination—that is, palpation. In order to be certain that the remaining benefit was due to mammography, one would have to confirm that excluding from the test group the 434 women who either were pregnant or had had breast cancer did not skew the results.

The ages of the women in the HIP study ranged from forty to sixty-four. Because few women in this age range are pregnant, most of the subjects excluded from the test group were surely dropped for having had breast cancer. In order to guarantee that the test and control groups were identical, the investigators would also have had to identify and exclude all the women in the control group who had breast cancer when the experiment began, by asking the same two questions they had asked women assigned to the test group. But they did not do this—they simply filed the names of the women in the control group, without performing any initial evaluation. (This was not unusual for control groups of the time.) As the trial progressed, the team leaders later wrote, women in the control group who "were identified through other sources as having had breast cancer diagnosed before their entry dates . . . were dropped from the investigation." In other words, the researchers tracked them by looking for their names in medical records, insurance claims, and death records; if they found evidence that breast cancer had been diagnosed in a member of the control group prior to 1963, when the study began, the scientists retroactively dropped her from the study. This meant that the researchers sometimes had to ascertain the time of diagnosis by finding very old records in scattered hospitals or asking family members about events many years in the past.

For my own research I have attempted to document medical histories, and can report that it is no easy task. Records disappear; memories are faulty; people move. More than half

the subjects in the HIP study left that health-maintenance organization within fifteen years. (In one trial I myself inadvertently transmitted incorrect data to its statistical administrators: I reported that a deceased patient was alive, because a busy doctor's office taking part in the trial was unaware of the death. When this omission was discovered, I asked the National Cancer Institute to examine the body of research data I had supervised, and I was cleared of any wrongdoing.) In my experience people typically underestimate the time that has elapsed since a trip to the hospital. Informed of the real date, they say, "That long ago? I can't believe that much time has gone by!" In those instances when Shapiro and Strax relied on the memories of patients and relatives, they almost certainly retained in the control group some cancer cases that had actually been diagnosed *before* the trial began—inadvertently stacking the deck in favor of mammography.

A few such slips would be enough to throw off the entire experiment. Indeed, if it turned out that Shapiro and Strax had ascribed a mistakenly late date of diagnosis to as few as twenty-five women in the control group, the failure to exclude them, too, would have changed the study's conclusions. Correcting for it would cause the benefit of mammography to lose statistical significance—the touchstone of medical research. Twenty-five errors is in this case not a big number; it is equivalent to about six percent of the 434 patients excluded from the test group. To be sure, the trial may have been error-free; although they had not initially excluded from the control group women who had had breast cancer, Shapiro and Strax wrote that "confidence is warranted" that by the trial's end they had identified prior breast-cancer cases equally well in both groups. Still, the vulnerability of the conclusions to such a small error is troubling.

No such methodological worries seem to afflict the second of the trials to show a statistically significant advantage from mammography: the Kopparberg study, named after the county in southern Sweden where it took place. Beginning in 1977 the Kopparberg trial offered mammography to a test group of 38,562 women and ordinary medical care to a control group of 18,478 women. At the same time, the researchers performed a second big trial in another Swedish county. The test group in Kopparberg experienced a statistically significant reduction in breast-cancer mortality of 40 percent; the mortality reduction in the test group in the other county was statistically insignificant.

Strangely, though, as the researchers acknowledged, the mortality from all causes in the two test groups was "identical" to that in the control groups. In 1988 the late Petr Skrabanek, of Trinity College, Dublin, pointed out in the *British Medical Journal*, "Not a single life was 'saved' in a trial that included over 130,000 women" in both counties. The women who underwent mammography may have died less frequently of cancer, but the gain was offset by deaths from other causes, such as heart attack. Presumably the "extra" deaths reflect the workings of chance. But it is awkward to argue that a decrease in cancer deaths in the treatment groups is meaningful while claiming that an equally great increase in deaths from other causes is a fluke.

CHEMOTHERAPY AND ANTIHORMONAL THERAPY DO BUY TIME—AN IMPORTANT ADVANCE. THE SLOWED PROGRESS OF THE DISEASE CAN GIVE A WOMAN ADDITIONAL YEARS OF LIFE AND EVEN ALLOW HER TO DIE OF OTHER, LESS TRAUMATIC CAUSES. BUT BREAST CANCER IS EVERY BIT AS INCURABLE AS IT EVER WAS.

One of the most recent clinical trials discussed in the *Cancer* article took place in Canada, where a team of physicians gave annual mammograms to 44,925 women and ordinary medical care to 44,910 women. The researchers enrolled women in the trial from 1980 to 1985 and followed their progress for a minimum of seven years. The subjects were divided by age into two subgroups: those who were forty to forty-nine when they entered the trial, and those who were fifty to fifty-nine. In neither subgroup was there an overall difference in mortality from breast cancer between the treatment and control groups—mammography had no effect.

Mammography supporters immediately dismissed these negative results as obvious signs of faulty equipment, poor training, or flawed experimental technique. Typical was the reaction of Charles R. Smart, then the director of the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control at the National Cancer Institute. Without presenting any supporting evidence, Smart dismissed a preliminary report from the Canadian researchers by writing in the journal *Cancer Prevention,* in 1990, "The lack of a decrease in mortality [in older women] suggests problems in the quality of the mammography in this trial."

Others took the Canadian trial more seriously. In a series of steps that sowed confusion in many women, the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society reviewed all the available evidence about mammography, especially for younger women. In October of 1993 the NCI reported that mammography provided no certain benefit to women under

fifty but some benefit to their elders. The American Cancer Society continued to endorse routine mammography for all women over forty. The dispute sparked by the inability of the Canadian study to find any benefit from routine mammography became bitter and personal. Angry critiques poured into the journals, and the Canadian researchers defended themselves with equal vigor. Contradictory editorials abounded.

The attacks and counterattacks clearly demonstrated how hard it has been to prove unequivocally that mammography has a strong beneficial effect on women's lives. Trying to resolve the controversy, several research teams employed a technique called meta-analysis. Roughly speaking, meta-analysis involves adding together the data from many clinical trials to create a single pool of data big enough to eliminate much of the statistical uncertainty that plagues individual trials. It is accomplished by gathering all available studies and comparing them one at a time with the "null hypothesis"—in this case the hypothesis that mammography has no impact whatever on mortality from breast cancer. If the null hypothesis is true, the series of comparisons should randomly differ from zero; added together, the chance variations will cancel one another out. If the studies consistently find an impact, the comparisons will draw the total away from the null hypothesis and toward the actual effect. The great virtue of meta-analysis is that clear findings can emerge from a group of studies whose findings are scattered all over the map.

In January of last year a team led by Karla Kerlikowse, of the University of California at San Francisco, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* the results of a meta-analysis of the eight trials: mammography reduces the seven-to-nine-year mortality from breast cancer in women aged fifty to seventy-four by about 23 percent, but it has no impact on women in their forties. A second meta-analysis of mammography for women in their forties appeared three months later in *Cancer* (the summary referred to above; its authors included Charles R. Smart, now retired). Including somewhat more recent data from the same trials, with an average follow-up time of 10.4 years, the *Cancer* article concluded that mammography in fact lowered the rate of mortality from breast cancer in women aged forty to forty-nine by about 16 percent. Indeed, these researchers argued, the true benefit was likely to be greater than that. First, the technology of mammograms is constantly improving. Second, not all the women in the groups scheduled to receive mammograms actually showed up for their examinations. Finally, Smart and his associates presented an argument for eliminating from consideration the results of the Canadian trial, because it had what they regarded as worrisome problems. For instance, almost four times as many advanced cancers were diagnosed in the women who had mammograms as in the women in the control group—a disproportionately high number of very dangerous tumors, which in the critics' view makes the experiment unrepresentative. If data from the Canadian trial were discarded, the researchers calculated, mammography would lower the rate of mortality from breast cancer for women in their forties by 24 percent.

Do the meta-analyses settle the matter? Yes and no. Even if one accepts the highest values from these overviews for the risk reduction associated with mammography—23 percent for women over fifty, 24 percent for women in their forties—the figures do not mean what people think when they read headlines about them. The percentages refer to the *relative* risk reduction—a statistical measurement calculated by dividing the difference between the risks in the test and control groups by the risk in the test group. For example, if a clinical trial shows that a treatment cuts the risk of dying from a disease from 70 percent in the control group to 50 percent in the test group, the relative risk reduction is 70 minus 50, or 20, divided by 50, which works out to 40 percent. This percentage sounds large, and it is of great import to medical researchers. But it has little to do with the question of interest to individual women—the *absolute* difference in risk between those who are screened and those who are not. Using the example I just gave, that difference would be 20 percent—half the relative risk reduction. In other words, the figure from the meta-analysis is the answer to the question "Given that I have breast cancer, how much will I have cut my risk of dying if the tumor was detected mammographically?" It is not the answer to the question "If I am a typical woman, how much will I cut my risk of dying from breast cancer by having an annual mammogram?"

Unfortunately, in this case the absolute reduction is much smaller than the relative reduction. According to a rough calculation described by Russell Harris and Linda Leininger, of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* in April of last year, annual mammographic screening for 10,000 women aged fifty to seventy will extend the lives of only two to six of them each year. ("The many must be screened to benefit the few," Harris and Leininger remarked.) For younger women, they argued, the benefit is even more meager: annual screening of 10,000 women in their forties will extend the lives of just one or two a year. As Harris and Leininger observed, "the use of the term 'marginal' to describe this risk reduction seems justified."

Even this small benefit may be more apparent than real. Almost all breast-cancer experts agree that mammography, which can diagnose smaller tumors, picks up some slow-growing cases of cancer that might otherwise never be caught. If these tumors grow sufficiently slowly, they will rarely become dangerous in a patient's lifetime. Discovering them will thus manufacture an apparent excess of "cures." Because we will detect the same number of big, dangerous, fast-growing tumors, the "cures" of slow-growing cancers will appear statistically only a number of years after diagnosis. Even if mammography had no actual effect on mortality, it would still produce a small statistical increase in survival

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many years down the pike. In a clinical trial the test group, with its frequent examination by mammography, would have a greater number of less-dangerous cancers diagnosed within it than would the control group—a form of length bias that would lead predictably to the modest prophylactic effect observed in the meta-analyses.

Society should ensure that this effect is worth the cost of obtaining it, which includes both the direct cost of mammography itself and the indirect cost of biopsies, laboratory analyses, and the time women must take off from work for checkups. (The emotional costs of the huge number of false positives are substantial too, but cannot be reckoned by this kind of accounting.) Charles Wright and C. Barber Mueller calculated in their *Lancet* article what they called a "low" estimate for the cost of mammography: $1.2 million for each woman benefited. Two previous cost-benefit analyses, they noted, produced comparable figures.

Now contrast the cost of mammography with that of another widely used cancer-screening technique: the Pap smear for cervical cancer. Named after George Papanicolaou, the physician who developed it in the 1930s, the test is less expensive than mammography, simpler to perform, and far more reliable. Because the Pap smear can detect cervical cancer in its long latent stage, before the cancer invades surrounding tissue, the test is widely believed to reduce the mortality of invasive cervical cancer by 90 percent. According to a study published in 1990 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* by David Eddy, of the Duke University Center for Health Policy Research and Education, screening 10,000 women with a Pap smear every three years from their twenties to their seventies would prevent about 200 of them from developing invasive cervical cancer; if each detected cervical cancer translated into an additional ten years of life, the cost to society would be approximately $150,000 per woman benefited. Eddy's calculation cannot be directly compared with that of Wright and Mueller, because it used a different methodology. Nonetheless, it is clear that Pap smears provide much more benefit than mammograms, at a small fraction of the cost.

Is mammography worth it? I would argue, with Wright and Mueller, that "the benefits of mass population screening, even in older women, are too small and the harm and cost generated too great to justify widespread implementation of screening mammography." In fact, the authors suggest that routine mammography should be recommended only for women at high risk of developing breast cancer, such as those whose mothers or sisters developed breast cancer early in life. There is little factual basis for this plausible-sounding suggestion, though.

A similar radical stance was adopted by Michael Baum, the research director of the British Institute of Cancer Research, who quit England's national breast-cancer-screening advisory board last September because nationwide mammography is "not worth doing." Having helped to set up the country's screening program, he was disturbed by claims about the effectiveness of mammography. The London *Sunday Times* quoted Baum as saying, "There is a political correctness about screening. I took pride in setting up the service, which is as efficient as it can be, but just because you are doing something efficiently, it doesn't mean it is worth doing."

Abandoning widespread mammography in the United States is probably not feasible. After years of effort invested in encouraging mammography, to reverse course would cause widespread confusion and anger. Alarmed by the contradictory recommendations of "experts," women would probably keep having mammograms, just to be safe—and in their shoes I might do the same. Moreover, many physicians believe that routine mammography encourages women to come in for regular checkups, and thus may play an important role in general preventive medicine.

On balance, then, I reluctantly support the status quo. When my patients come in for their mammograms, I do not try to dissuade them. But I tell them that the most optimistic interpretation of the available evidence suggests that routine mammography has only a marginal effect on a woman's chances of surviving breast cancer—and that it may have no effect at all.

ARE WE CURING BREAST CANCER?

ONCE a tumor has been found, whether by mammography or palpation, it must be treated. The basis for the contemporary approach dates back to the 1890s, when William Halsted, a professor of surgery at Johns Hopkins University, developed radical mastectomy—the technique for removing a breast, the underlying chest muscles, and the lymph nodes in the armpit. A giant in medical history, Halsted was held in such respect that surgeons after him took an uncommonly long time to admit that his ideas about cancer were off base. He believed that breast cancer oozed slowly through the lymphatic system of the body the way foul water from a brackish pond travels through ditches to other parts of the landscape. (The lymphatic system is the collection of ducts, lymph nodes, and other organs that drain the tissue fluid called lymph into the bloodstream.) To Halsted's way of thinking, breast cancer could be cured by carving a wide swath around the initial tumor and its draining sites, leaving clear margins of healthy tissue—a scorched-earth approach.

Seventy-five years later a number of North American researchers began questioning Halsted's ideas. Instead of seeping slowly throughout the body from its initial site, breast cancer seemed to hop from place to place as cells sloughed off by the main tumor mass floated through the bloodstream. If this was true, removing a woman's entire breast would often be pointless, because most of the tissue surrounding the tumor would be healthy. After this heretical notion provoked much controversy among cancer specialists, Bernard Fisher,

of the University of Pittsburgh, put together a series of large clinical trials that were intended to resolve the dispute. These trials demonstrated that a much less drastic operation called a lumpectomy was appropriate in many cases; when combined with radiation therapy it provided a chance of survival indistinguishable from that provided by Halsted-style mastectomy. After the results were published, in the mid-1980s, surgical practices changed. Remarkably, though, they didn't change very fast. Even today only a third of the women who undergo breast surgery have lumpectomies, whereas at least two thirds probably could, in light of the size of their tumors. The rest have modified radical mastectomies, a somewhat less severe version of Halsted's operation.

In the same period researchers questioned another tacit assumption about breast cancer: that lumps in the breast appear suddenly and must be treated quickly. Instead we have come to think that most breast tumors take years to develop to detectable size; some need decades. In its initial stages the tumor would be visible under a microscope—if one could somehow scan the entire breast with such precision. Only after months or years, however, can the malignancy be detected on a mammogram or by palpation. Yet standard practice still involves a rush to operate after diagnosis. The patient wants to know the details of her condition right away, and surgical exploration is the only conclusive means of providing this information. But surgeons also operate partly in the name of "getting this thing out before it spreads." I cannot count the number of times I have seen a surgeon solemnly tell anxious family members in the hospital waiting room, "Well, we got it all." Although surgeons today target their work more carefully and humanely than they did in the past, they still ignore a crucial fact: we cannot know whether we "got it all." Although our treatments can eliminate the primary tumor (not a small consideration, given its potential danger), there is little evidence that we actually eradicate breast cancer in any more patients than we did decades ago.

As I said, switching when appropriate from mastectomy to lumpectomy leaves survival rates unaffected—the less-severe operation simply does the same job. And we have, in my view, less than compelling evidence that routine mammography benefits otherwise healthy women. Any improvement in our treatment of breast cancer must therefore come from radiation or chemotherapy, both of which are by now standard practice. After a lumpectomy, according to a meta-analysis published last November in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, radiation decreases the risk of recurrence in the breast region (local-regional recurrence, as it is known)

to that associated with full mastectomy—five to 10 percent during the next ten years. Without radiation the risk is about 20 percent. But radiation has no known effect on distant metastases from breast cancer (nonlocal recurrence), which are the chief sources of danger. As a result, post-surgical radiation has no demonstrable effect on survival—a point seldom made clear to patients. Reducing local recurrence is a reasonable goal, because any tumor in the breast could be lethal. But it will not diminish the danger from metastases.

Nor should we think that the modest benefit from radiation has no price. Radiation therapy is rough on the body. It kills cells, inducing inflammation in the breast. Responding to the inflammation, cells called fibroblasts proliferate and lay down scar tissue. Fifteen to twenty-five years after radiation therapy tissues in the irradiated area often feel thick, hard, even wooden—a strange, unpleasant sensation. Meanwhile, the blast of radiation may have created genetic damage that will lead to other types of cancer. For instance, worrisome evidence suggests that radiation may promote lung cancer in the irradiated side of the body. The risk seems slight, but its mere possibility should remind physicians that radiation therapy is not without its price.

Chemotherapy is a more complex issue, with better-established benefits and fewer side effects than it had in the past. Chemotherapeutic compounds kill cancer cells; the hope is that they will destroy any metastases lurking in the body. Thirty years ago chemotherapy was a treatment of last resort, administered only to patients with extensive metastatic disease. I can recall flying overnight to the University of Wisconsin in 1959 to pick up some precious vials of 5-fluorouracil, one of the first, then-experimental chemotherapeutic treatments, for a woman whose cancer was overwhelming her liver. I was dismayed when the drug made her extremely sick, though I thought that it might have postponed her death a little. In the early 1970s researchers discovered that chemotherapy was also effective when several agents were administered right after surgery—as an adjuvant treatment, in the jargon. Today chemotherapy is usually given in the form of a pharmaceutical cocktail, one of the most common being cyclophosphamide (sold principally under the trade name Cytoxan), doxorubicin (Adriamycin), and the original 5-fluorouracil (sold under several names, but usually called 5-FU). Although we have discovered how to moderate the side effects of chemotherapy, it is still heavy going. Common complaints include fatigue, nausea, hair loss, mouth sores, diarrhea, and premature menopause.

Chemotherapy is more effective in younger, pre-menopausal women than in older, postmenopausal women. Many researchers believe that premenopausal women receive this extra benefit because the drugs chemically destroy the function of their ovaries, frequently stopping their monthly estrogen-progesterone cycles. The decline in hormone production affects the two out of three tumors that are estrogen- or progesterone-receptor-positive. Deprived of the chemical catalyst they need to grow, the metastases often shrink, lengthening the time until they become dangerous.

PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THE HORMONAL CHANGES IN WOMEN'S LIVES, PHYSICIANS ARE INCREASINGLY LIKELY TO OBSERVE A "NEW" CANCER: SLOWER-GROWING AND MUCH LESS DANGEROUS. BECAUSE IT PROGRESSES SO MUCH MORE SLOWLY, IT HAS A VERY DIFFERENT IMPACT ON WOMEN'S LIVES.

Before chemotherapy, doctors sought to create a similar effect by directly removing patients' ovaries. If the cancer recurred, they tried to amplify the effect by removing women's adrenal glands. These small, triangular organs sit atop the kidneys and secrete hormones, one of which is DHEA, a still-mysterious substance that is a favorite preoccupation of health faddists. Most women convert some of the DHEA into estrogen, thus producing small amounts of estrogen after menopause. Even cutting out the adrenal glands—a procedure involving major abdominal surgery—wasn't the final step. In their zeal to combat estrogen, doctors also injected women with testosterone or prescribed synthetic male hormones.

Although these treatments sometimes slowed the progress of breast cancer, their cumulative impact was horrific and even barbarous. After having the breast and underlying tissue on one side of her chest cut away and covered with a thin skin graft, a woman could be subjected to intense radiation therapy, primitive forms of chemotherapy, the removal of her ovaries, and, eventually, the removal of her adrenal glands. If this failed, she might be injected with male hormones that made her skin oily, pimply, and hairy.

Things are better today. Surgery is often less severe; chemotherapy can be more tolerable; and, perhaps most important, there is a substitute for removing the adrenal glands and injecting women with testosterone. In the 1970s researchers discovered that the actions of estrogen and other hormones can be blocked chemically by drugs called hormone antagonists, of which the most noteworthy is tamox-

ifen, which is sold under the trade name Nolvadex. Circulating in the body, tamoxifen molecules prevent breast cells from linking up to estrogen or progesterone molecules by attaching themselves to the cells in their place, blocking the hormones completely. Because hormones can stimulate the growth of the majority of breast tumors that are estrogen- or progesterone-receptor-positive, the potential of tamoxifen for treating this type of cancer is clear. (Tumors that do not respond to hormones grow faster and are less treatable.) Tamoxifen can cause irregular periods or aggravate hot flashes; it also apparently increases the risk of uterine cancer. But it is a vast improvement over removing women's adrenal glands.

Many studies have shown that the unwanted side effects of chemotherapy and antihormonal therapy are offset by the benefits. A compelling example is the Early Breast Cancer Trialists' Collaborative Group, an Oxford-based meta-analysis of 133 randomized clinical trials around the world which examined the effects of chemotherapy and antihormonal tamoxifen therapy on 74,652 women with breast cancer. In the trials breast-cancer patients were usually given mastectomies or lumpectomies and then divided randomly into two groups: one that received some type of chemotherapy or antihormonal therapy (the test group) and one that did not (the control group). The Oxford group reported in 1992 that women who underwent either treatment after surgery had a 12 to 14 percent greater chance of surviving for ten years than those who did not.

Note, though, exactly how this good news was phrased. The improved survival prospect for women who underwent these treatments was in comparison with the prospect for breast-cancer patients who received no systemic therapy—a relative, rather than absolute, increase in survival. Without chemotherapy, a woman with breast cancer faces a 55 percent chance of dying within ten years, according to the Oxford team. Chemotherapy cuts the figure to 48.7 percent, an absolute difference of 6.3 percent. Similar figures appeared in the tamoxifen trials. After surgery 41.2 percent of the women receiving tamoxifen died within ten years, whereas 47.4 percent of the control group died—an absolute difference of 6.2 percent. The treatments, then, buy some time for some women, and this is a very good thing; any woman told that she has even a small chance of surviving longer with adjuvant treatment will likely choose it. Nevertheless, we should not be extolling these therapies as major breakthroughs.

"Wait a minute," some readers may be saying. "Are you being too quick to dismiss these results? Don't these decreases in risk mean that we are eliminating this disease in some people? It may be a small number, but aren't we curing a few more than we did in the past?" These questions are difficult to answer, not least because they involve coming up with a good definition of "cure." For instance, if a woman of sixty-five is treated for breast cancer and then dies five years later of a heart attack, was she "cured" of cancer? Her family, friends, and even her doctor might think so, because the disease never troubled her again. Indeed, a common clinical definition of "cure" is survival for five or ten years. Many researchers would be less quick to claim a cure, because the cancer might have been on its way to recurring when the heart attack intervened.

Acknowledging these complexities, statisticians evolved a precise definition for "cure" in the 1950s. A true cure of a lethal disease like breast cancer is achieved *only* when people with that disease face the same chance of death as others in the population of the same age and sex. Such true cures are possible with many diseases. Most pneumonia sufferers, for instance, after recovering with the aid of antibiotics have exactly the same prospects for survival as people who have never had pneumonia. Like pneumonia, some cancers, including cervical cancer, childhood leukemia, superficial melanomas, and Hodgkin's disease, can be truly cured.

Breast cancer, unfortunately, is not among this select group. As far as we know, a woman found to have invasive breast cancer is always at higher risk of dying prematurely than women without breast cancer. Even thirty years after her diagnosis she is up to sixteen times as likely to die of the disease as a woman in the general population. That is why responsible researchers in this field avoid the word "cure." Even as they report advances, they must acknowledge the reality: Postsurgical chemotherapy and antihormonal therapy do buy time—an important advance. The slowed progress of the disease can give a woman additional years of life and even allow her to die of other, less traumatic, causes. But breast cancer is every bit as incurable as it was in Halsted's day.

ANOTHER VIEW OF BREAST CANCER

In 1935, 26.2 out of every 100,000 women died of breast cancer. That was a long time ago, of course, when life expectancy for women was sixty-four years. Americans now live longer, which means that diseases of the elderly are more common. Although breast cancer affects many young women, it is still principally a disease of middle and old age—the median age at diagnosis is sixty-four. Statisticians must adjust raw data about incidence and mortality to compensate for underlying demographic shifts. In 1992, the latest year for which figures are available, the adjusted rate of mortality was 26.2 women per 100,000—the same as in 1935. (The death rate rose a bit from 1986 to 1989 and declined by about the same amount from 1989 to 1992.) Since 1935 medicine has seen improvements in surgical technique and anesthesia, and the introduction of mammography, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy, along with an enormous jump in general medical knowledge. But all this progress has had no effect on the chances that an individual woman will die of breast cancer. To my way of thinking, the constancy of the

death rate in the face of rising incidence and aggressive treatment is a strong hint that we need to approach the disease in another way.

When I discussed the evidence relating to mammography, radiation, and chemotherapy, I was in the realm of fact—although some colleagues may disagree with my interpretation. In what follows I am moving into unsteadier terrain. Of course, I believe that my view of breast cancer is correct, and much of it is shared by other specialists. But I will be satisfied if I can persuade readers that the mere existence of a coherent alternative explanation raises questions about the mainstream view.

As I have said, almost all cancer researchers think that the disease is triggered by an accidental change in the DNA of at least one cell. That cell divides, producing two cells, then four, then eight, and so on, with the volume of the tumor doubling in each successive generation. By the time the tumor has doubled twenty-three times, the original cancer cell has multiplied to more than eight million. At that point the tumor is about an eighth of an inch in diameter, just big enough to be detected (sometimes) by a mammogram.

Such a tumor is not very dangerous by itself; the danger lies in the metastases. The question is how soon the tumor metastasizes.

For almost thirty years John S. Spratt, a cancer surgeon now at the University of Louisville Department of Surgery, has been measuring the growth rates of breast tumors. In one of his most recent studies, performed in collaboration with researchers from Heidelberg, Germany, Spratt examined the progressive mammograms of 448 women who had tumors that turned out to have been visible in mammograms made before the tumors were diagnosed. (The women's doctors were not necessarily at fault for missing the tumors; in many cases mammographic imagery is ambiguous.) Comparing first, second, and even third mammograms provided evidence of how fast the tumors grew in the intervals. The median doubling time was 260 days, but the range was considerable: the fastest tumor doubled in ten days, the slowest in 7,051 days—that is, almost twenty years. These figures have striking implications.

Consider a woman who is unlucky enough to develop a single cancerous cell on her forty-third birthday. If the woman is especially unlucky, the cell has a fast doubling time of, say, thirty days. Twenty-three cell generations later the tumor might be visible on a mammogram; in another six or seven doublings it will be just big enough to feel. By then the woman will be forty-five. She will probably die before her fiftieth birthday. If, though, the woman develops a cancer with a slow doubling time of, say, 360 days, twenty-three doublings will take about twenty-three years, at which point the tumor might be seen with mammography. The tumor will be palpable in another six or seven years, meaning that without mammography it probably would not be detected until the woman was in her mid-seventies. By that age some people have already died of other causes.

I have simplified these calculations considerably. Spratt and his German colleagues found that breast cancers do not grow at a constant rate but instead slow down as time passes. Yet the principle holds that tumors that begin with fast doubling rates grow faster than tumors that begin with slow doubling rates at comparable stages of formation.

Close scrutiny of tumor doubling times could explain why the earlier diagnoses provided by mammography seem to provide so little prolonging of individual lives, despite the statistical appearance of benefit caused by earlier diagnosis. Although mammography is able to spot tumors as small as an eighth of an inch, which contain eight million cells, the average size at diagnosis with mammography is about 600 million cells. Such a tumor is only a bit more than a quarter of an inch across, but it has already doubled almost twenty-seven times and may have been in the body for decades. The average size of tumors detected by palpation is about 45 billion cells and about an inch and a quarter in diameter; these tumors have doubled an additional eight or nine times. To argue that earlier diagnosis provides an important benefit, one must believe that the tumor is considerably likelier to spread in those eight or nine later doublings than it was in the preceding twenty-seven.

There is no evidence that this is the case; indeed, the small amount of available data suggests that this view is wrong. With mammography we can see breast tumors earlier than we could before. But it is illogical to assume that our newfound ability to observe breast tumors between the twenty-seventh and thirty-fifth doublings means that they are especially likely to spread during this time or afterward and not before. If tumors are more likely to metastasize after rather than before mammography can detect them, the burden is on mammography advocates to demonstrate it. Meanwhile, I believe that the reasonable course is to assume that breast cancer can spread at any time in its development, and that metastasis has probably already occurred by the time we are able to detect the primary tumor. If this view is correct—and I should stress that studies to prove it have not yet been conducted—then it would explain why research has had such difficulty proving that mammography can save women's lives.

Similarly, examination of tumor doubling times could explain why chemotherapy boosts five- and ten-year survival rates but has little impact on the annual percentage of women who die of breast cancer—that is, why it helps women with the disease to live longer but leaves them just as likely to die of metastatic breast cancer in the end. My best guess is that adjuvant chemotherapy wipes out 95 to 99.9 percent of the residual cancer cells in a patient's body. (It doesn't get them all because the remaining tumor cells are innately resistant to chemotherapy.) Expressed as a percentage, the figures are im-

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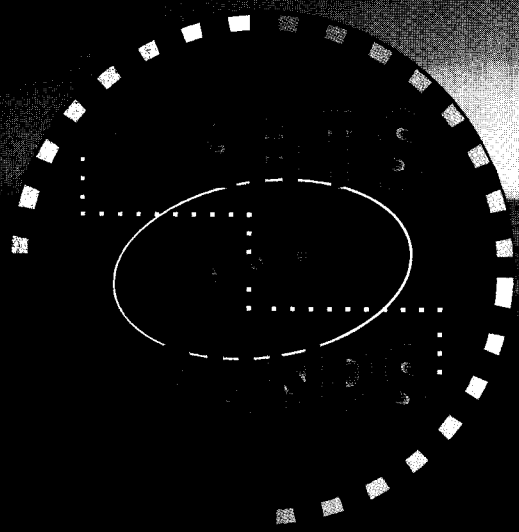

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pressive, but the actual impact is surprisingly slight. Suppose that a woman's tumor has metastasized and that the new tumor has grown to a million cells—a lot of cells, but not enough to be seen by the naked eye, or palpated, or spotted by any current imaging method (CAT scan, ultrasound, magnetic resonance imaging, and so on). If chemotherapy kills 99 percent of the cancer cells in a woman's body, this prophylactic treatment will reduce the metastasis from a million cells to 10,000. The remaining cells, which are resistant to chemotherapy, will keep on proliferating, more than likely at the same rate. In six and two thirds cell generations the tumor will have grown back to a million cells and the woman will be right back where she was before treatment began.

Cruelly, chemotherapy helps least those who need it most. If a woman's cancer has the short doubling time of thirty days, the six and two thirds doublings the tumor needs to recover from chemotherapy translate into about 200 days. Because chemotherapy is often administered monthly for six months, the gain is roughly equivalent to the length of treatment. Producing so much suffering, chemotherapy would in this case be a dubious exercise. If the woman's cancer has a doubling time of 360 days, however, she would gain 2,400 days, which is six and a half years. That sounds like a good payoff, but does she need it? If cancer were diagnosed in that woman at sixty-four (the median age of diagnosis), her slow-growing metastases would probably not become life-threatening for twenty to twenty-five years, when she would be in her late eighties. Because most people do not live that long, there would be little point in subjecting her to a round of chemotherapeutic treatment that would give her another seven years when she probably would die of something else in the meantime. If chemotherapy has little impact on a woman's chance of surviving either aggressive or indolent tumors, is it any wonder that it makes few inroads on mortality?

At the same time, chemotherapy should not be dismissed. The calculations above, for doubling times of thirty and 360 days, represent extremes; I used them to illustrate my point. A more representative example would apply Spratt's median doubling time of 260 days to my hypothetical forty-three-year-old woman. If, as before, the first cancer cell develops on her birthday, the resultant tumor could take eighteen to twenty years to show up on a mammogram. (Such calculations are necessarily inexact, because individual tumors do not always grow at the same rate.) The woman would then be in her early sixties—near the median age of diagnosis. With no treatment other than lumpectomy, she would be likely to die before the age of seventy-five. But if chemotherapy gave the woman the time it would take the tumor to double another six or seven times, the onset of life-threatening metastatic disease would be postponed until the woman was at least eighty; antihormonal therapy might buy an equivalent number of years. In real terms the achievement would probably be smaller, because people in their eighties are likely to die of heart disease or some other condition. Nonetheless, the woman would have gained five to ten years of life. This is a precious gift, one that she and her doctor can justly celebrate.

But consider the breast-cancer patients doctors most dread seeing—women in their thirties or forties. Such cases are relatively uncommon; breast cancer owes its status as the leading killer of women in this age group mostly to the even lower likelihood that they will be killed by anything else. Nonetheless, the individual tragedy of a disease that strikes down young, vibrant people makes it disproportionately urgent to treat them. Sadly, younger women in whom cancer is diagnosed are more likely than older women to have fast-growing tumors, because slow-growing tumors are usually still too small to detect. Given the probable doubling rates, these women will be lucky if we can give them an extra five years. Five years is, of course, much better than nothing—but much less than the thirty or forty years these women will lose. Anyone who treats younger breast-cancer patients knows that we will not have made major progress in the treatment of this disease until we can give women like these, with fast-growing cancers, thirty doubling times rather than six or seven.

CANCER OLD AND NEW

In effect, mammography today provides our definition of breast cancer. Any tumor spotted on a mammogram is treated, almost reflexively, with surgery, radiation, and often chemotherapy and antihormonal drugs. Thinking about doubling times suggests the inadequacy of this approach. When doctors diagnosed breast cancer by palpation in annual exams, they found principally fast-growing tumors—ones whose average doubling time, according to the work of Spratt and other researchers, was about ninety days. Despite decades of work, medicine still is unable to treat this kind of cancer effectively. Today the spectrum of breast cancer is different. Perhaps because of the hormonal changes created by the changes in women's lives, physicians are increasingly likely to observe the "new" cancer described above, which is slower-growing and much less dangerous. These cancers, because they progress so much more slowly, have a radically different impact on women's lives. For that reason we should be more discriminating in how we treat them.

"New" may be a misnomer for this slow-growing breast cancer. Although its incidence has risen, I suspect that it has been with us for at least fifty years; we just weren't able to see it. In fact, I would not be surprised if someday we are all found to harbor somewhere in our bodies several small, slow-growing tumors that will never cause us any problems. (They are beaten to the punch by cardiovascular disease or faster-growing cancers.)

Among the most important varieties of the new breast cancer is the *in situ* tumor—the small, localized, almost non-

growing tumor that at the time of diagnosis has seemingly neither become invasive nor developed the capacity to metastasize. Prior to mammography, as noted earlier, *in situ* tumors accounted for only one to two percent of all breast-cancer diagnoses, whereas today in communities where people see doctors often and have lots of tests, *in situ* tumors account for at least 10 percent of all breast-cancer diagnoses. After lumpectomy and radiation, only one out of ten *in situ* malignancies recurs in the next five to eight years.

Most of my colleagues celebrate this as a triumph, because it appears that we are catching cancers earlier than ever and curing more of them. They may be right. But consider this—if one out of ten *in situ* cancers recurs after treatment, nine out of ten do not. If my view is correct, even without treatment many or most *in situ* cancers would never have grown big enough to be detected by palpation, let alone to pose a threat to life. They might even have become invasive and metastasized, but the metastases would also be too small to be detectable and would never be lethal—rendering the recurrence rate and thus the question of treatment ultimately unimportant to survival. As a result, mammography is only leading physicians to diagnose an ever-larger number of harmless tumors. Patients who otherwise would never have known they have cancer may needlessly suffer through the unique pain, anxiety, disfigurement, and expense associated with modern medicine and cancer. For all we know, the chief effect of mammography has been to disguise our inability to cure the old cancer, by burying it in cases of new cancer.

WHEN THE DIAGNOSIS IS POSITIVE

BECAUSE of the prevalence of *in situ* and other slow-growing breast cancers, women who receive a positive mammogram should not despair. Two thirds to four fifths of positive mammograms lead to biopsies that do not reveal cancer. Even if the biopsy indicates cancer, the patient should keep in mind that not all tumors are truly dangerous, and she should strive to learn what kind of tumor she has.

Although scientists are divided in their opinion of its accuracy, I believe that one of the most promising gauges of risk is the "S-phase fraction," which is a rough measure of a tumor's doubling time, derived from a technique known as flow cytometry. Technicians calculate this measure by chopping up a small amount of tumor tissue in a kind of specialized blender, staining the cell nuclei with a dye, and squirting the result one cell at a time through a very fine nozzle. The cells shoot through a thin laser beam, each nucleus casting a shadow as it crosses the light. Computers record the shadows with enough detail to discern the approximate percentage of cells in the sample that are dividing. From these data physicians can infer whether the cancer is aggressive (a doubling time of sixty days or less), moderate (sixty-one to 150 days), indolent (151 to 300 days), or very indolent (more than 300 days). Because tumor growth rates may change over time, and metastases do not necessarily march in lockstep with the tumors that spawned them, the actual situation faced by patients is more complex than indicated by this summary. Nevertheless, I believe that the broad principle holds: armed with information about a tumor's growth rate and the patient's age at diagnosis, doctors could often be more informative than they are now about what lies ahead for their patients.

If doctors could accurately gauge tumor growth rates, using any agreed-upon test, my strong hunch is that about a third of the tumors now detected would be found not to need treatment beyond removal of the tumor itself. Perhaps another quarter of women in whom breast cancer is diagnosed could gain considerable time—enough to take them safely into old age—with antihormonal therapy alone. The remainder could be helped by the combination of surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy, though not nearly as much as the providers of these treatments or their patients would hope. For this last group of women, I am very sorry to say, modern medicine has less to offer than newspaper headlines suggest. The outcome was dictated well before diagnosis—by the date the first cancer cells developed and by the rate at which they grew.

If, as I suspect, a woman's fate is set very early in the development of a tumor, it seems implausible that advances in detection will have an impact on the disease. One can always hope that science will develop a wonder drug that eradicates tumors completely, even when they can't be seen or felt. But for the present I think we should focus research on improving our ability to distinguish between women with breast cancer who can benefit from aggressive treatment and the larger number who will gain little from it no matter what we do.

The ultimate hope is preventing this awful disease, perhaps by modifying the contemporary hormonal environment that seems to promote it. Researchers at the University of Southern California have been examining ways to lower young women's exposure to reproductive hormones. Another approach is to use an anti-estrogen drug like tamoxifen preventively in postmenopausal women whose histories of breast problems indicate that they are at high risk of developing cancer; I am involved in a study that is examining this kind of treatment. The risks in changing the hormonal balance of millions of women are considerable, however, and it seems likely that any new preventive for breast cancer will have its own side effects.

Advances in this area will surely be slow, but they may be the only realistic hope for eventually lowering the death rate from breast cancer. Meanwhile, we should carefully consider whether we are misleading some women with messages of unwarranted hope at the same time that we are needlessly terrifying and hurting other women by diagnosing and treating a condition that will never pose a threat to their lives.

Conspiracy Buffs

by EDWARD J. DELANEY

LYLE and Deborah haven't been to New York before. The convention of the East Coast Assassination Investigation Workshops has finally brought them to the city, at Lyle's insistence. Deborah has found, even coming in from the airport, that New York is as she has heard—the rudeness and all. She looks out of the hotel van and sees a grungy man in another car staring at her, unabashed. She looks away.

"How safe do you think we'll be?" Deborah says.

"Like I said before, we'll be fine," Lyle says. "As long as we stay in the hotel or close by, we'll be fine. We'll be among friends."

Lyle and Deborah are both forty-eight. They live in Denver now, where Lyle services photocopiers and Deborah is in insurance. They have no children, and for this reason they have the luxury of spending a week here. Lyle wanted to go "all out" for this, and Deborah doesn't mind. At the regional conventions they've been to, in Dallas three times, and also in Portland and Kansas City, she has always found plenty to do while Lyle attends his seminars. Last year, in Kansas City, while he sat through "The Warren Commission: Footnotes and Falsehoods," she shopped and went sightseeing and had long, contemplative lunches by herself. When they returned home, Lyle holed up in his basement file room every night after dinner, sure he was on to something. Lyle feels he has made a breakthrough, and this is why they have come to the Big One, in New York. Their dogs, matching lhasa apsos named Zapruder and Mannlicher, are being boarded at the veterinarian's.

She believes in a single shooter. Had he known this before they married, she knows, it would have been a sign of incompatibility he couldn't stomach

Checking in at the hotel, Lyle is recognized. When he says, "Reservation for Lyle Asay," a man off to the rear of them says, "Umbrella Man." In this age of specialization the Umbrella Man happens to be Lyle's specialty.

"That man's talking to you, honey," Deborah says.

"What?"

"Him. He said, 'Umbrella Man.'"

Lyle turns, and with a grin introduces himself. The man's name is Otto Litwak. He is an eighty-ish man with the bearing of a professor. He, too, will be attending tomorrow's 10:30 A.M. conference, "The Umbrella Man: Grassy Knoll, Sunny Day—Signals and Codes?"

"I am something of an expert myself," Litwak says, "although not of your caliber. Word has come from the American interior about your work."

"I don't recall hearing your name," Lyle says.

"I stay in Trenton," Litwak says. "I don't travel much."

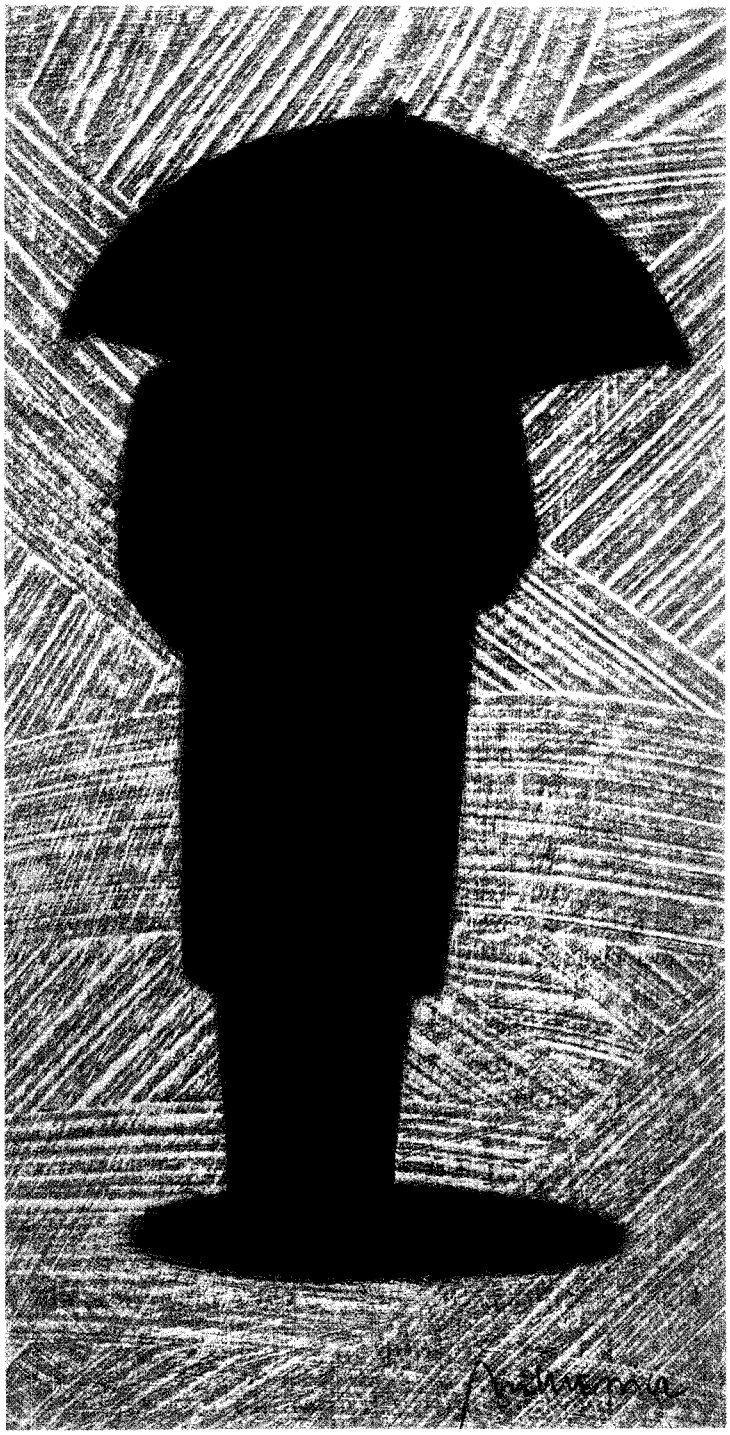
All the way up in the elevator Lyle is ecstatic. Deborah asks him if it wasn't rude to have said he'd never heard of the man. Lyle says, "But I never have."

Illustrations by Adam Niklewicz

Although he is not a panel member at the conference, Lyle has planned to seize the floor and present his findings, which he believes will prove that the Umbrella Man was the linchpin of the conspirators' plan. Seizing the floor is a part of the culture, and he has already circulated word that he'll be doing it. He was worried that he might not be known in New York as he is in Kansas City and Portland, but now that fear is laid aside.

"People are expecting me!" Lyle says. He's got his tan suit on, with the big cowboy hat, as if he were a Texas Ranger, or maybe a cattleman.

"This is the big moment!" he says. "This is where they bite the bullet!" Then he says what he always says when he's excited: "Jack, you son of a bitch!"



Lyle has been saving up and doing his research for two years, waiting to be here, and his excitement has been further churned by rumors that Oliver Stone will show up to speak. Lyle and his friends believe that Stone will be making a sequel to *JFK*, and word is that he will hire three technical advisers for hundreds of thousands of dollars each.

Deborah knows very little about Lyle's theories. She prefers to ignore them. She believes in a single shooter. Had he known this before they married, she knows, it would have been a sign of incompatibility he couldn't stomach. So she has distanced herself. "Kennedy's dead and we can't change that," she says to Lyle when he asks her opinion on things. There is an unreflective doggedness in these words that Lyle clearly finds disturbing, and therefore avoids. He hasn't asked for years. For the most part their marriage is good.

All the way from the house in Denver, Lyle has carried his heavy briefcase with him, and now he is unwilling to trust it to the bellhop. Deborah has decided that his next Christmas gift should be a new briefcase, and that she will find a way to have a handcuff attached. She knows Lyle well enough to know that he'll love it: it will be a semi-serious gift, like the pink pillbox hat he got her a few years ago. He has a flair for showmanship, and for paranoia. In the airport coffee shop in Chicago, waiting to switch planes, he held the briefcase between his ankles while they ate.

In their room, when the rest of the luggage has arrived, he snaps open the briefcase and stacks his piles of manila folders on the table. Deborah hangs up their clothes, takes a shower, and gets dressed. At six o'clock she says, "Lyle? Dinner?"

He looks up from his papers as if she has just burst in unexpectedly. "Gee, Deb," he says, "I don't know if I can, with my conference first thing in the morning." He is nervous, she can tell. She shrugs. "I'll go down alone," she says. "I need to get out of this room for a while."

On the elevator down to the lobby she doesn't feel upset. This is typical. After the Umbrella Man conference Lyle will attend another four and a half days of meetings, but he will be more relaxed, having gotten past his own moment of special attention.

At the third floor a man steps into the elevator, and she sees that it is Litwak.

"Ah, Mrs. Asay!" he says. "Off to dine, are we?"

"Lyle's reviewing his papers," she says. "He wants to be ready."

"I should think you know a great deal about the Umbrella Man yourself," Litwak says. "What is your favorite aspect of the case?"

"Nothing, really," Deborah says. "I really don't pay much attention."

Litwak laughs. "I'm sure you're being modest. I know that my own accomplishments could not have amounted to anything without the support of the late Mrs. Litwak. I remember how she'd listen to each of my new hypotheses, and then rip it to shreds. Back to the drawing board! You must know the main points of his argument."

"I don't think so," she says. "Did your wife really do that?" She thinks she has seen only men at these conventions.

When they get off the elevator, Litwak nods good-bye and shuffles off toward the street. In the hotel dining room Deborah has a club sandwich and orders a glass of wine, and then she looks in the gift shop before returning to the room. Lyle is in the same bent position as when she left.

"I saw your friend Litwak on the elevator down," she says.

This gets Lyle's attention. "What did he say?"

"Nothing much. Just hello. He was asking for you."

"Yeah? What was he asking?"

"He was asking about your work."

Lyle stands now, his hand still on a stack of papers. He has the umbrella out, the one he brings to conferences, to demonstrate various postulates. He also has a toy gun, a plastic Luger, to demonstrate the way it could be slipped beneath the furled fabric. Lyle has told Deborah that he has learned the theatrics necessary to his endeavors.

"I've never heard of this guy," Lyle says. He picks up the telephone, retrieves a slip of paper from his pocket, and dials. "Fritz Reis," he says. Fritz is another buff from Denver, a close ally. He's staying at a less-expensive hotel uptown.

"Fritz? Lyle. Tell me if you've ever heard the name Otto Litwak." He listens. "No, no. I mean now. He's here. I never have either. But he knows my work."

When he hangs up, Lyle drums the desk with his fingers. "Fritz says he's never heard of him. Greg is there, and he doesn't know him either. No one has ever heard of him."

Lyle picks up the house phone. "Do you have a guest by the name of Litwak here?" he says. After a moment he says, "You don't? I see. Thank you." He looks at Deborah. "Jack, you son of a bitch," he says.

LYLE and Deborah have been married twenty-two years. At first Deborah didn't notice the obsession in Lyle. He was someone who seemed to take a general interest in politics. He bought a few books. He was in his mid-twenties and seemed to have better things to do. The reading he did, of the Warren Commission report and *Death of a President* and all the newspaper stories, indicated to her something vaguely cerebral. He was working as a fabrication engineer then, and the after-work investigations gave him a break from the pressure.

The twentieth anniversary of the assassination, however, seemed to set him off. His company had been downsizing, and Lyle had taken a buyout and tried to start his own company, selling public-domain software. He had a little office in their basement, and a lot of free time as he sat there waiting for people to phone in orders. That was when he began to see the whole grand scheme.

It didn't start with the Umbrella Man. It started with the puffs of smoke from behind the wall. He began researching weapons and ammunition, trying to determine what might have caused the puffs of white. He tried to be a generalist. He tried to delve into Ferrie and Shaw. But as he studied photos taken across the Grassy Knoll, he couldn't get his mind off the Umbrella Man.

The first order of tomorrow's meeting will no doubt be the discrediting of one Louis Witt, who came forward in the seventies to claim that he was the Umbrella Man. He has explained himself by saying that the umbrella he opened on that sunny day was symbolic of appeasement, a reference to Chamberlain's rolling over for Hitler on that fateful day in Munich. But trashing Witt is always a prelude to the real talks, like an invocation. Lyle once got Witt on the phone, years ago, with a tape recorder running and a suction-cup microphone on the receiver. He shouted at Witt until the man, after demanding to know how Lyle got his phone number, hung up. Deborah remembers the redness of Lyle's face after that call, his wild-eyed look; she remembers it because he has it now, thinking of Litwak. Deborah has put on her nightgown and gotten into bed. In the corner Lyle is still going over his documents.

"Honey," she says, "come to bed. You need to rest."

WHEN she awakens, a little before six, Lyle is still at the table, in his clothes. Has he slept and then gotten up again? "Lyle, are you all right?"

"I'm fine," he says. "I'm ready." He stands up and his hands move toward his back, which stiffens when he does these all-night sessions. "I just need a shower," he says.

She knows he won't go down for breakfast, so while he's in the shower, she orders room service. He's still in the bathroom, shaving, when the food comes, scrambled eggs and toast and orange juice and coffee. In a hotel bathrobe, he eats quickly, without talking, and then he gets dressed, knotting a geometrically patterned tie that exactly matches Kennedy's on that day: the Kansas City convention had a guy in a booth selling these ties and PT-109 tie clips, both of which sold out almost immediately.

"In case you need to know, I'm going to go to Macy's to-

day," Deborah says. "Then Bergdorf Goodman. I don't want you to worry."

Distracted, Lyle says, "Where's my umbrella?"

"I don't know," Deborah says.

"It was right here on the table. When I went in the shower."

"I never touched it, honey."

"I don't believe this," Lyle says.

He looks all around the room, in the closet, under the bed, and in the bathroom. "It's gone," he says.

"It's got to be here somewhere," Deborah says.

"It's not, can't you see that?" he says. He stands, rubbing his bottom lip with his fingertips, and then he says, "Who brought the food?"

"Oh, Lyle, come on."

"Is there any other explanation?" he says. *"Is there any other explanation?"*

"I don't know," she says.

"Now I have to find a new umbrella!" he says. He goes to the table, takes his plastic Luger, and puts it in his waistband at the small of his back. He puts on his suit coat and hefts his briefcase to his side, and then he's gone.

Within ten minutes Deborah finds the umbrella, underneath the folded-back bedcovers. She realizes that the boy from room service had to move the umbrella from the table, so that he could put the tray of food there. She finishes dressing, and on the way out she takes the umbrella with her.

In the lobby of the hall where the convention is taking place, she finds the registration-and-information table. "I'm trying to give this to someone," she says, holding out the umbrella.

"We don't go for pranks," the man at the table says. He is wearing sunglasses and has a beige wire snaking from his collar up into his ear.

"No, honestly," she says. "My husband thought he had lost it, but it's found. He really may need it."

"Listen," the man says, "there are a hundred and ten people in that room, and I can count on one hand the number of people who walked in *without* an umbrella. If he needs to use one, he has plenty to choose from."

"No," she says. "He needs this one."

The man jumps to his feet. "Hey," he says, "we don't want any funny business here."

IN Bergdorf Goodman she decides that she shouldn't have thrown Lyle's umbrella in a trash can, but she knows she'll never get it back. She walked from the information table out through the lobby; on the street she saw that the day was cool and brilliant, and, disgusted, she relieved herself of the umbrella. She knows she'll never hear the end of it if she doesn't admit it wasn't stolen.

She likes crowded places, and moves through the store slowly, rustling against passing shoppers as they squeeze by islands of merchandise. She can't help thinking what Lyle often asks when they are in a well-known place: "Can you imagine what it was like here on that day?" Lyle's memory of all that is sharply defined. He grew up in Delaware, and he recalls being on the broad lawn outside his high school gym, playing touch football, when he heard.

Deborah told Lyle that she doesn't remember what she was doing when she heard, and that threw him into a rage. Then he came up with a restyled theory: she was in shock. Actually she remembers precisely what she was doing. She was on a first date with her hottest flame ever, Westy Dodd. They were sitting in a soda shop in her home town of Brad-

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LISTENING TO THE GARDEN

Look at it this way: under the brass fanfare
of their blossoms, all those zucchinis
are really incipient oompahs.
And the peavine tremolos? Middle C
rubbed out of a rhubarb stalk?

Now you're beginning to hear it: that line
of radishes ostinato, bean paradiddles,
a beefsteak tomato redballing its cadenza.

Aren't the parts of these vegetables—the phloem,
the calyx and carina—names of woodwinds
you'd love to hear, in counterpoint
to the garden's valves and bells?

Remember that morning you drove
into the main street of a town—Colorado Springs,
was it?—on no holiday you could name?

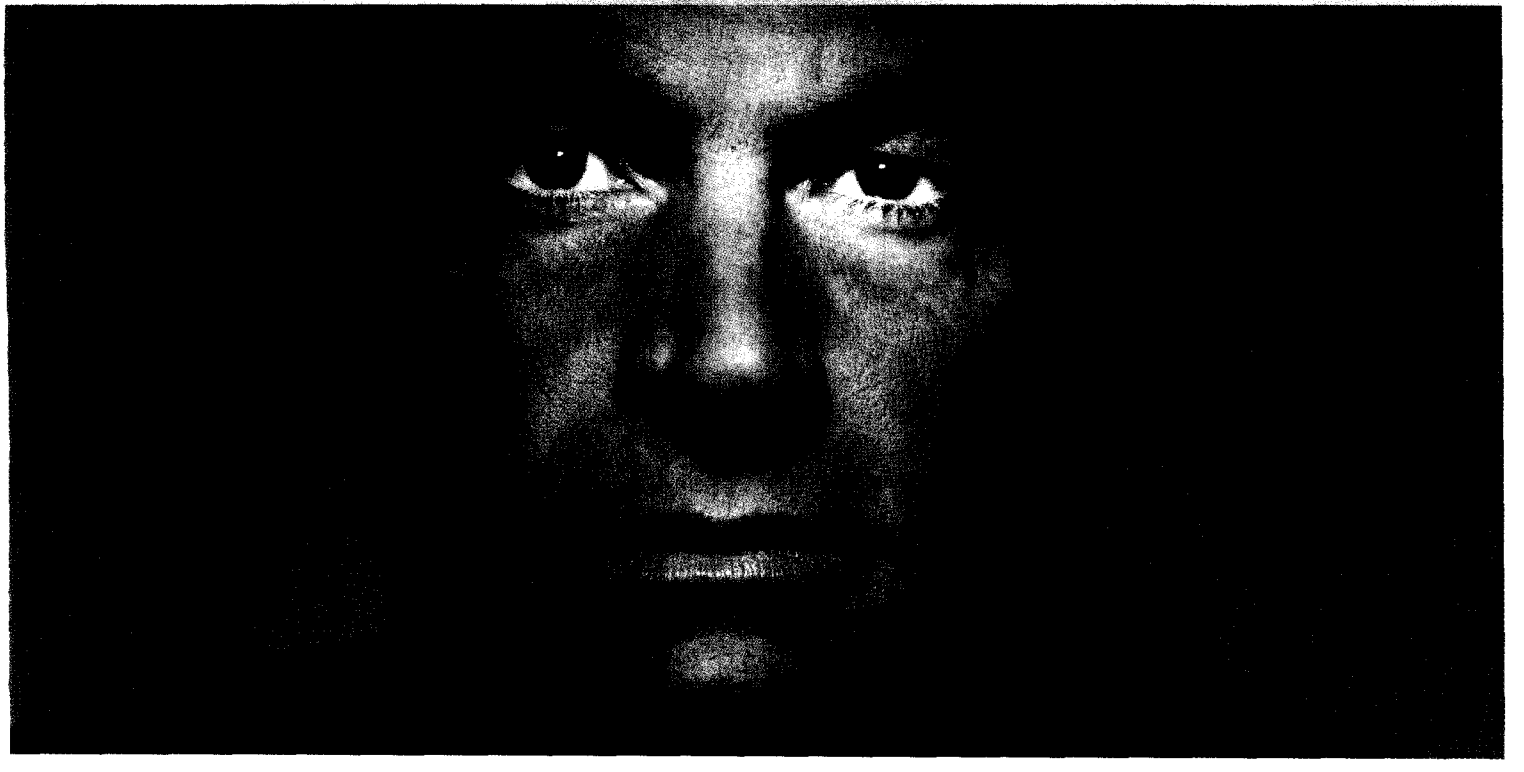
Nevertheless, the high school band was passing,
majorettes in their short, flippant skirts
frilled like the inner linings of lettuce,
and shakos, corn-tassel plumed, remember,

and the frogging on jackets—cucumber vines
scrolled on themselves. The whole garden's
flash and patootle was moving off
toward a snowed-upon peak
down at the end of that street.

—BRENDAN GALVIN

I have seen history unfold before me. I have seen the enduring strength of the human spirit.
I have seen freedom triumph over oppression. I would like to see peace.

-James Nachtwey, photojournalist.



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* Professional exam fees not included.

ford, Pennsylvania. Someone, some face from her high school homeroom, ran into the place and said, "Somebody shot the President!" If she had a reaction, its intensity has faded in memory, and what she remembers is the brief thought that this date would be ruined. Then Westy—his slicked-down blond hair gleaming in the fall light—reached across and took her hands in his, and said, "Let's choose not to be unhappy." She remembers thinking, *That's all right with me*. By nightfall, as the nation mourned, she was making out with Westy in his father's Rambler. Their romance lasted only a month, but by then everyone had adjusted, and she had seemed to just float above the sadness.

Of course, everyone has memories, and hers, she knows, matter only in light of Lyle's passions. The memory is one that would otherwise have been lost, or filed away, or blunted.

AFTER her shopping is completed, she takes a cab back to the hotel. When she comes into their room, the person she sees is Fritz. He's a thin and graying man, probably about her age. He's sitting on the edge of the bed, holding a plastic cup filled with ice and his usual Dewar's.

Greg is at the table, staring at the television. He is a fat kid of twenty-one or twenty-two whom Deborah and Lyle met in Kansas City. He has come over to the assassination theorists from the *Star Trek* crowd, he says, because he has come to understand how the assassination is the root of almost everything important, including *Star Trek*, which he now understands was an enormous homage to Kennedy and his vision.

"Hail to the Queen!" Fritz says, raising his cup. Greg, in a T-shirt that rides above his beltline, revealing pale and copious flesh, simply says, "Deborah."

"Your husband struck fear in the hearts of the Darts," Fritz says. The Darts are an Umbrella faction that contends that the umbrella on the Grassy Knoll was actually a clever weapon that shot tiny poisonous darts. Lyle's theory is that the umbrella, which is seen open and sideways in most photographs, was held high on the shaft as the Umbrella Man brought a pistol to eye level, to achieve accuracy in the shot that hit Kennedy's neck—the wound that was passed off by conspiracy-connected doctors as an exit wound. Lyle believes that should the real umbrella ever be found, it would have a small hole in its fabric, precut to accommodate the gun's muzzle. The lack of that hole in Louis Witt's umbrella proves that Witt was not the Umbrella Man.

"Where's Lyle?" Deborah says.

"In the shower," Fritz says. "Then we're going to dinner."

"Oh," Deborah says.

Lyle is just coming out of the bathroom, wrapped in a towel, carrying his own drink. "I didn't think you'd mind, Deb," he says. "We have so much to review."

"I made reservations for only two," she says.

"Already changed them," Lyle says.

But they don't get in at the restaurant they've chosen, because Greg refuses to wear a tie, putatively on principle. They end up at a vaguely seedy diner a few blocks away. The place serves beer, and the men resume their drinking. Lyle is still glowing. He has not yet even mentioned the lost umbrella, to Deborah's relief. The three men fall into a rehash of the day's events.

"Can you believe them?" Lyle says of the Darts. "I mean, what's their problem?"

"They're crackpots," Fritz says.

"I mean, why not just make a big joke out of the whole thing?" Lyle says. "Why not just mock the man's legacy?"

Fritz turns to Deborah. "You should have seen your old man in there. He took the floor away from the panel. People were listening, and I could hear some of them whispering, 'Who *is* that?' Lyle just knocked them dead. His reconstruction of events was so—logical! They just sat stunned when he was finished."

"The Darts were met, and found wanting," Greg says.

But Lyle isn't talking much.

"Honey?" Deborah says. "Are you all right?"

Lyle allows himself a semi-grin. "I'm fine," he says.

"It's that Litwak that's got him worked up," Fritz says. "That Litwak's an odd duck."

"What did he do?" Deborah says.

"He was just *there*, hanging at the edges," Fritz says. "Very suspicious, you know? Very weird."

"Is he a Dart?"

"He's not anything," Greg says, in a nearly annoyed way. "Don't you see the point? An unknown man appears, by coincidence, as Lyle Asay is checking in, coincidentally bumps into Mrs. Asay on the elevator, proceeds to grill her about what she knows, coincidentally appears at a convention as Mr. Asay reveals what may be the key to the entire conspiracy."

"He didn't grill me," Deborah says.

"They know that approach doesn't work," Fritz says.

"They're very sophisticated."

"What are you trying to say?" Deborah says.

"He could be very dangerous," Greg says. Lyle nods gravely.

"Oh, come on," Deborah says.

"I'd replace that plastic Luger with the real thing," Fritz says.

"Most women just don't get these kinds of things," Greg says.

Deborah says nothing more, and the others quiet down and slowly sip from their beer glasses. They part cursorily on the street; walking back toward their hotel, Deborah says, "I mean, Lyle, my God!"

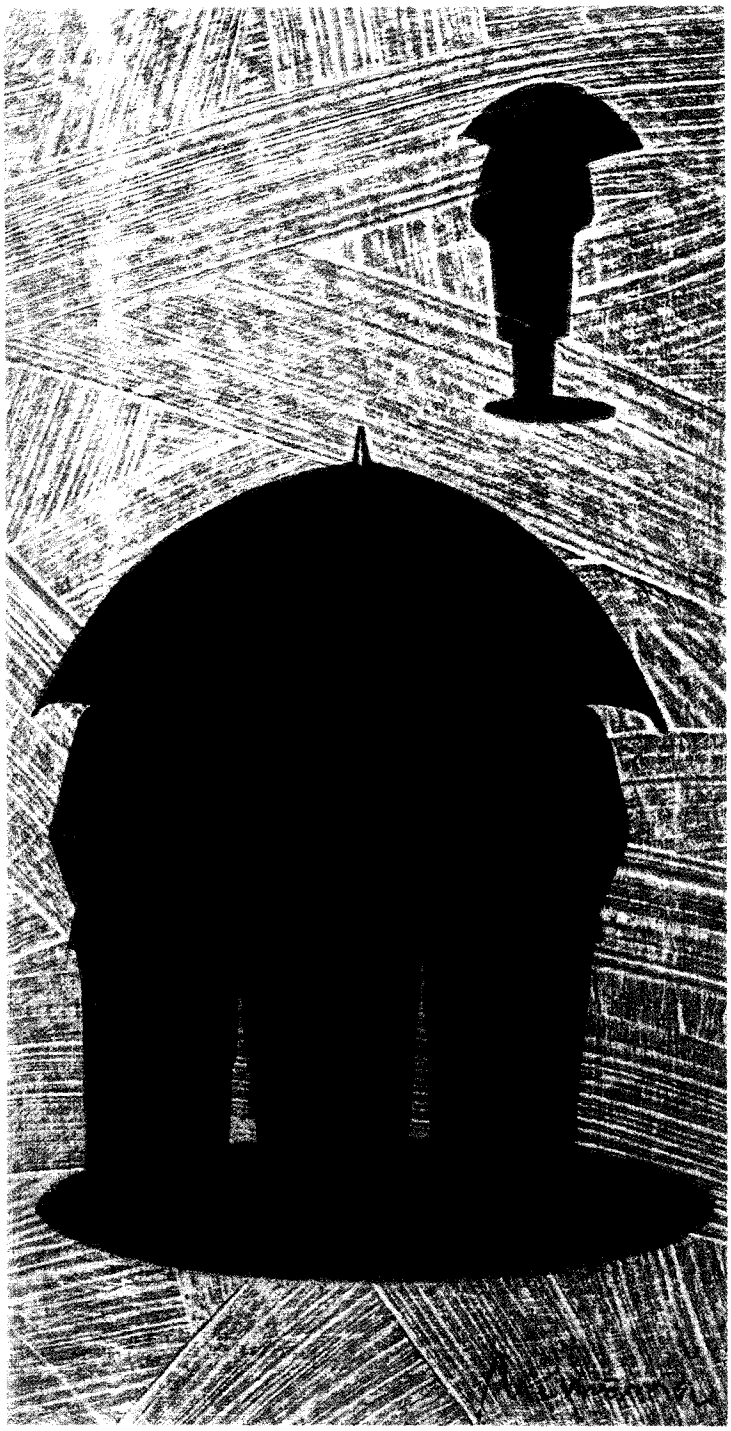
"They're my friends," he says. "They're looking out for me."

"Do you really think you're in some kind of danger?"

"Man checks in under an assumed name, comes literally out of nowhere," Lyle says.

"He came from somewhere," she says. "Everybody comes from somewhere. I think he said Trenton."

"Yes," Lyle says. "But there is one key fact, an indisputable thing: an umbrella stolen from a hotel room on a cloudless day. Explain that one."



THEY walk the rest of the way without speaking. In the hotel room Lyle undresses and gets in bed. "I didn't sleep last night," he says, and then he is asleep. It's not even nine o'clock. She wants to put on the television, but she's afraid it will wake him. She takes the room key from his pants, rides the elevator to the lobby, and sits on a couch facing the front entrance. She is in New York and wants to watch the world go by.

After an hour or more has passed, she sees Litwak coming in. He is small and precise, dressed with fastidiousness. He sees her, smiles, and then approaches.

"Your husband was quite marvelous today," he says.

"He'll be happy to hear that," Deborah says. "I told him we'd spoken, and he wanted to invite you to join us for dinner. But you weren't registered here."

"I am with my friend Stein," he says. "We split the costs, so that Mrs. Stein won't think we're being frivolous." He turns and signals a man who is hovering nearby. "Bill, come meet Mrs. Asay." Stein is also elderly. "We're both retired from the transit authority, down in Philadelphia," Litwak says. "We share an interest, and decided this convention would be quite a lot of fun."

"And has it been?" she says.

"Beyond our expectations," Stein says. "So many fascinating theories."

"You know, they all spy on each other," Deborah says. The two old men look at each other approvingly.

"I was a numismatist," Stein says. "But that crowd has gotten unforgivably dull. Besides, looking at coins strains my eyes now. Otto brought me in from the cold."

"We are discussing our own umbrella theory," Stein says. "But of course we can't reveal it. Perhaps next year."

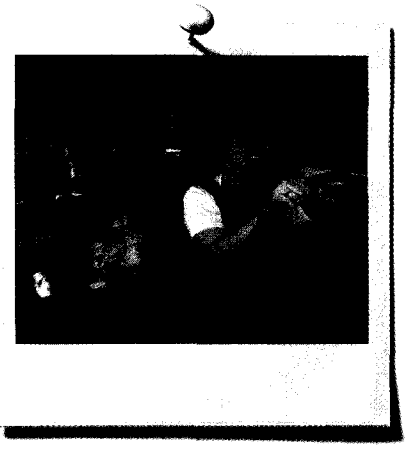
"I'm eager to hear it," Deborah says.

A while after the men have gotten on the elevator, Deborah rises and makes her way up to the room. As she comes through the door, Lyle starts up, staring from his side of the bed, but then his eyes roll back and he's asleep again. She realizes in these moments that both of them have begun to age. Deborah knows that the vacation will get better, as they always do. By tomorrow Lyle will be more like himself.

She thinks of Lyle as he was, as he must have been, a boy racing across a field, waiting for a football to descend into his hands, a boy only moments away from hearing the news. He will never shake the idea of a conspiracy; it informs his days; but in that moment of youthful self-absorption the crime was not against a man he never met but against the person Lyle was and could have been. Lyle, the young man going old, now rolls over on his side, and she can hear only his soft snore against the blankets. What pictures form in his head she cannot say.

> "They say the new Saturns are a lot quieter."
>
> I guess I'll just have to take their word for it.

Is it just us, or is it loud out there? Because, boy, it sure seems like, wherever we go, all we hear is noise, noise, noise. It almost makes you wish someone would go take the guy who invented the car horn out, and—well, honk at him. But seeing how he's probably living incognito on some remote and, we're willing to bet, very quiet island somewhere, we've gone ahead and done the next best thing: we've made the interior of the new Saturns significantly quieter. Take our new wagon, for example. Tucked away inside the door panels are several layers of sound-deadening materials including Thinsulate. The engine compartment is sheathed with a superefficient, space-age material which absorbs noise and vibration like a sponge. Even the exterior was painstakingly redesigned to reduce wind noise. All in an effort to make this one of the quietest small wagons on the road today. And you should have seen Saturn owner and mother of twin girls Chris Vachon's reaction when we told her all this. She smiled and said, very politely, "I'm sorry, I didn't hear a word you said; would you repeat that please?" So we did.



Chris Vachon, mother of twins and Saturn owner, says, "All I ever hear is 'WAAAAAAA, WOOF, WOOF.'"

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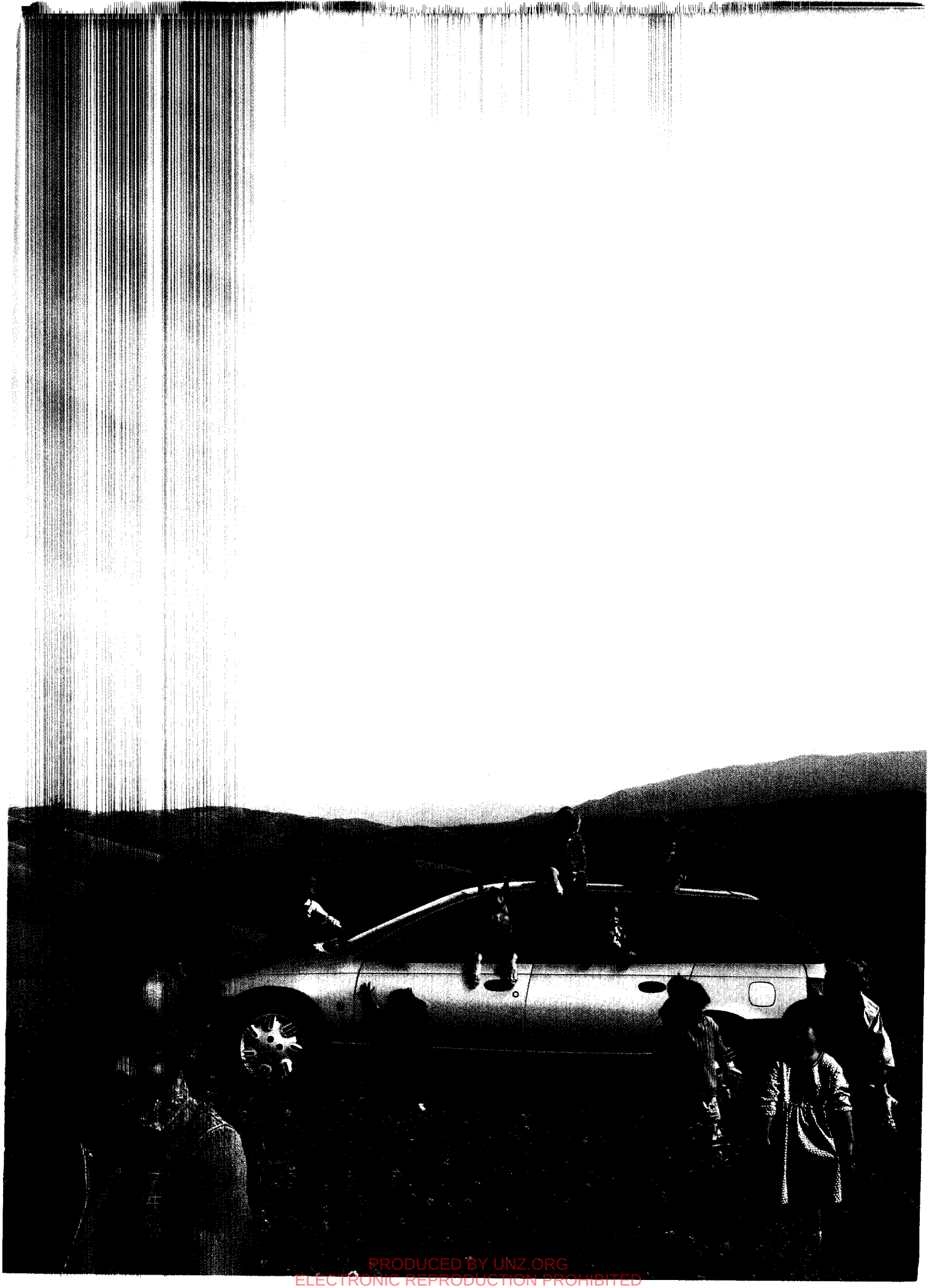


WHY AMERICA THINKS IT HAS TO RUN THE WORLD

by BENJAMIN SCHWARZ

The Cold War is over, and America is staggering under a colossal debt and an accumulation of frightening social problems. Yet it continues to spend billions to protect Germany and Japan—two rich nations whose freedom is in no apparent danger. Why? Here is the answer that the foreign-policy elite would give if it dared to speak frankly about the delicate matter of American efforts to assert international economic and political control

THREE years ago, in light of the end of the Cold War, the Clinton Administration undertook a "fundamental reassessment" of America's national-security requirements. But after six months of analysis Administration officials concluded that the defense of U.S. global interests still demanded military spending of more than $1.3 trillion over the following five years and the permanent commitment of more than 200,000 U.S. soldiers in East Asia and Europe—in other words, a strategy remarkably similar to that which America pursued during the Cold War. Moreover, rather than relinquish America's costly and risky responsibilities by dissolving Cold War alliances, defense strategists now plan to expand NATO's responsibilities eastward. Those who call for a more modest plan argue that U.S. strategy seems to be extravagance born of paranoia, or of the defense establishment's anxiety to protect its budget. In fact, given the way the makers of U.S. foreign policy have defined American interests since the late 1940s, these plans are quite prudent. And that is the problem.

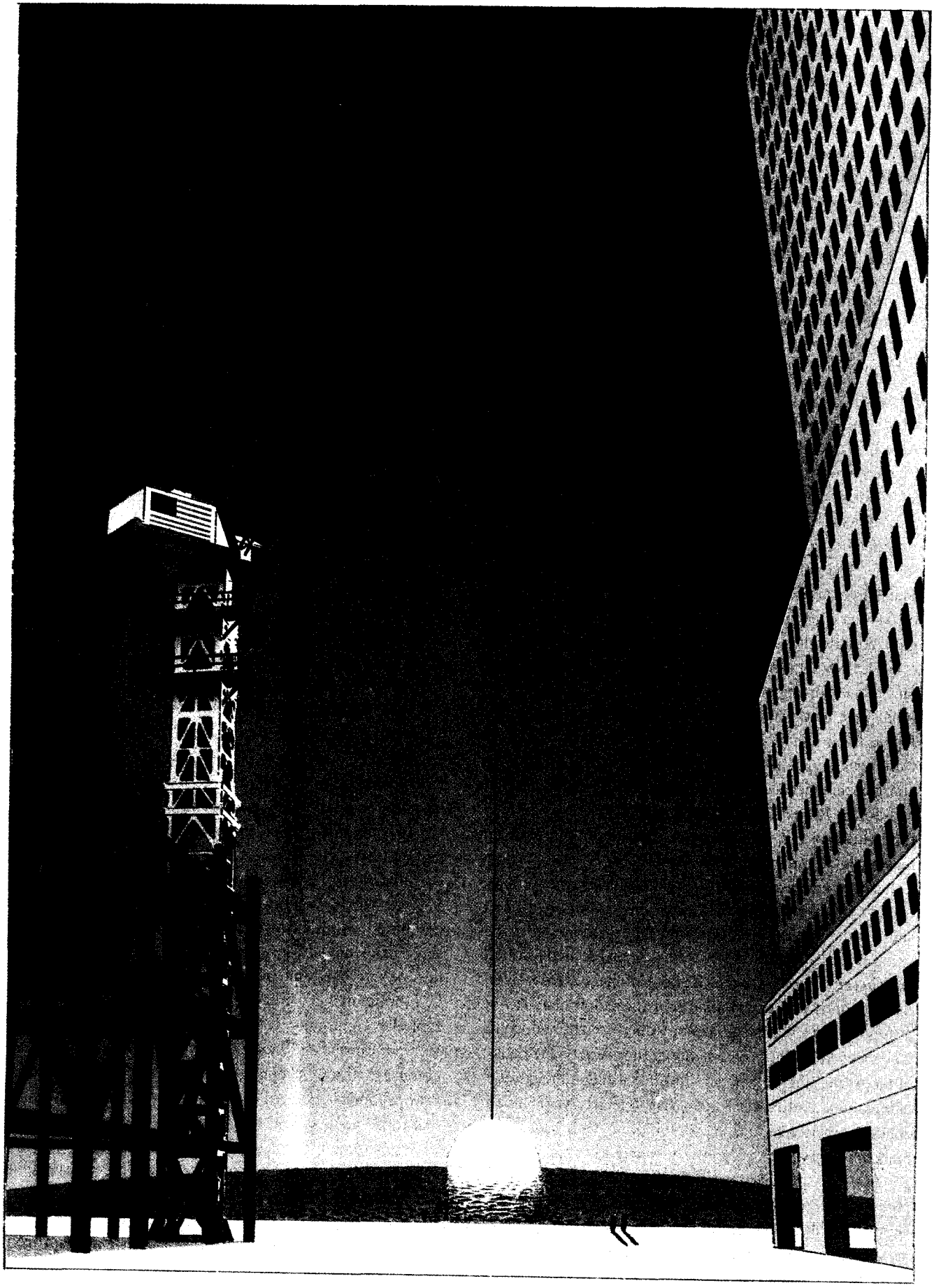
If many Americans had been asked ten years ago why U.S. troops were deployed in East Asia and Europe, they would have answered, To keep the Soviets out. They may have wondered, however, why the United States persisted in its strategy long after Japan, South Korea, and Western Europe had become capable of defending themselves. Now that the USSR itself has disappeared, why does Washington continue to insist that U.S. "leadership" in East Asia and Europe is still indispensable?

Ask National Security Council staff members, think-tank analysts, or State Department policy planners about America's globe-girdling security commitments and they will deliver very different answers—ones that have not changed in forty-five years. They will justify the Pax Americana by invoking "the imperative of continued U.S. world leadership," the need to "shape a favorable international environment," "reassurance of allies," and the ongoing need for "stability" and "continuing engagement." Even during the Cold War the "Soviet threat" might not have been mentioned.

The question that all this justification ignores is What, exactly, is "leadership," and why has it been the mantra of foreign-policy cognoscenti for nearly fifty years? What have we been doing around the globe, and why?

Most Americans misunderstand their country's foreign policy. It seems to operate only when "danger" looms—when Iraq invades Kuwait, when Russian "imperialism" threatens to resurface, when China rattles its sabers at Taiwan. Even people who religiously read the newspapers fail to grasp that U.S. foreign policy is far more than simply a series of responses to crises.

For instance, media coverage of recurring tensions on the Korean Peninsula has focused on speculation about North Korea's nuclear program and the prospect of a new Korean war. But when foreign-policy officials and experts discuss the Korean crisis among themselves, they rapidly leave the Koreas behind to focus on the real players in the region: China and Japan. As far as national-security experts are concerned, almost any immediate crisis is subsumed by a larger threat—in this case no less than East Asia's role in the potential collapse of the international economy that U.S. power has sustained since the late 1940s.



Illustrations by Guy Billout

It's now an axiom of the U.S. foreign-policy establishment that economic, technological, and demographic changes are making East Asia the world's most dynamic arena, a driving force—increasingly the dominant force—in the international economy. The Pacific Century, we are told ad nauseam, has dawned. This transformation also means a shift in the international distribution of political and military power. In a typical evaluation of East Asia's strategic future the foreign-policy expert Aaron Friedberg states darkly in the journal *International Security*,

> In the long run, it is Asia [rather than Europe] that seems far more likely to be the cockpit of great power conflict. The half millennium during which Europe was the world's primary generator of war (as well as of wealth and knowledge) is coming to a close. But, for better and for worse, Europe's past could be Asia's future.

Friedberg's assertion nicely illustrates the ambivalence with which the U.S. national-security community views East Asia's future. He both prophesies an exhilarating Pacific Century and warns the West that the East may once again be up to no good.

East Asia has never been a terribly successful field for American diplomacy. There are undoubtedly many reasons for this, and surely that shortcoming for which the United States is continually indicted—cultural and historical myopia—has contributed enormously to its failures in the region. Americans have always seen East Asia not for what it is but for what it can do to them or for them: the region is either danger or opportunity—either a new "ground war in Asia" or a new China market. American understanding of Japan, for instance, is, in the words of the historian Bruce Cumings, caught within the conflicting views of Japan as "miracle and menace, docile and aggressive, fragile blossom and Tokyo Rose." As Friedberg's analysis attests, the U.S. foreign-policy community worries that the fragile blossom may again bloom into a Tokyo Rose.

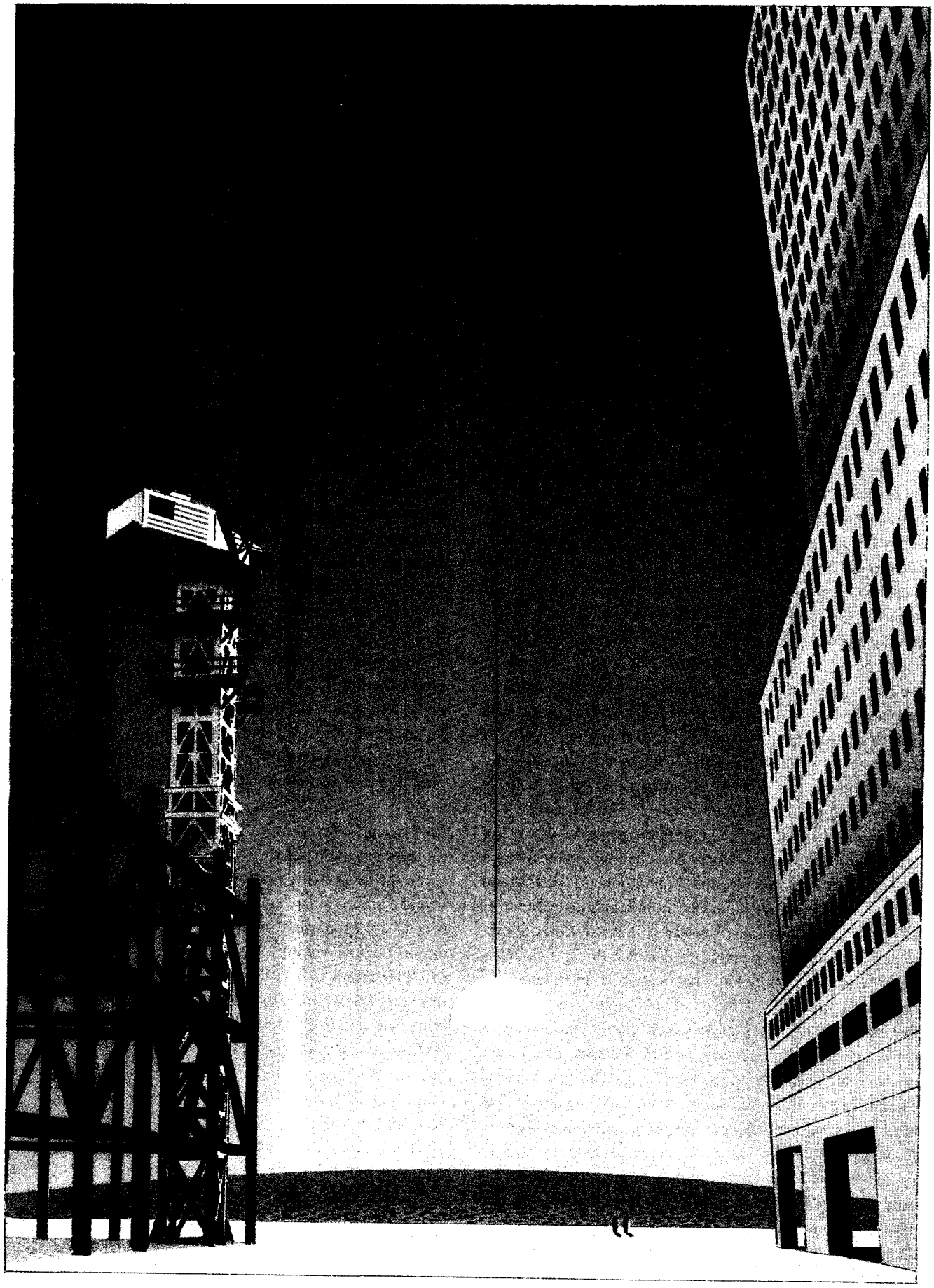
Pacific Century rhetoric usually describes the new era in a "post–Cold War" context. This is misleading, because it starts at the wrong place. First, the shift of economic activity has not been sudden. Even if East Asia rose in the American consciousness just as the Soviet Union receded, to define the economic and geopolitical transformation of East Asia as a post–Cold War phenomenon Americanizes and trivializes a development in international (not American) politics of far greater impact than the Cold War itself. Although Vietnam, China, and North Korea were for forty years able to contain America's Cold War ambition to "roll back" communism, they are proving utterly unable to contain the juggernaut of East Asia's capitalist political economy. Most important, to imply that the end of the Cold War is of primary significance to U.S. policy in East Asia is to wrench that policy out of its most important context and to distort its underlying aims and challenges.

What we think of as the Cold War was merely instrumental in America's larger "Cold War" strategy. In "scaring hell out of the American people," as Senator Arthur Vandenberg said in 1947, the U.S.-Soviet rivalry helped to secure domestic support for Washington's ambition to create a U.S.-dominated world order. That same year one of Vandenberg's colleagues, the fervently anti-Communist Senator Robert Taft, expressed a strong suspicion that the supposed dangers to the nation from the USSR failed to explain America's new foreign policy. He complained that he was "more than a bit tired of having the Russian menace invoked as a reason for doing any—and every—thing that might or might not be desirable or necessary on its own merits." The former Secretary of State Dean Acheson put things in proper perspective: describing how Washington overcame domestic opposition to its internationalist policies in 1950, he recalled in 1954 that at that critical moment the crisis in Korea "came along and saved us."

MAKING THE WORLD SAFE FOR CAPITALISM

A FUNDAMENTAL aim of America's Cold War strategy was to create and maintain what the former Secretary of State James Baker has called "a global liberal economic regime"—a capitalist world order. After the Second World War, American statesmen believed that the United States, standing alone and strong in a world of weary nations, had a remarkable opportunity, as Acheson said, to "grab hold of history and make it conform." American statesmen seized that opportunity by creating a complex strategy to reify Adam Smith's dream. Washington envisioned a world economy in which trade and capital would flow across national boundaries in response to the laws of comparative advantage and supply and demand—an economy in which production and finance would be integrated on a global scale. The constricted national markets that were emerging in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War in Europe and East Asia would be combined, eliminating the inefficiencies of statism and self-sufficiency. Large-scale regional economies would in turn be integrated into an interdependent world economy. U.S. policymakers knew that building this multinational capitalist community required the United States to provide Western Europe and Japan with enormous amounts of economic aid (through such schemes as the Marshall Plan, for Europe, and the Dodge Plan, its equivalent for Japan), so that those areas would not retreat into closed economies. They also knew that an open world economy demanded an even more ambitious American project: transforming international relations.

The greatest danger to U.S. democracy and prosperity came, they believed, not from the Soviet Union but from Germany and Japan, whose potential strength amounted to a



sort of Catch-22. Without a flourishing international economy, Under Secretary of State Will Clayton warned in 1947, "our democratic free enterprise system" could not function. As late as 1960 exports accounted for only 3.8 percent and imports for 4.8 percent of GDP. The health of the international economy, in this disputable view, depended on Germany's and Japan's economic revitalization. Germany, if its economy was resurrected, would once again be Europe's most efficient producer and most avid consumer. Its very economic potential, however, made Germany a threat to the other Western European states, which, as the future Secretary of State John Foster Dulles explained to a closed Senate panel in 1949, were "afraid to bring that strong, powerful, highly concentrated group of people into unity with them." Similarly, as Dulles, Acheson, and other policymakers understood, a strong Japan was both necessary for a prosperous international order and intolerable to its neighbors. The problem lay in the inherent contradiction between capitalism and international politics.

Capitalist economies prosper most when labor, technology, and capital are fluid, so that they are driven toward international integration and interdependence. But whereas all states benefit absolutely in an open international economy, some states benefit more than others. In the normal course of world politics, in which states are driven to compete for their security, the relative distribution of power is a country's principal concern, discouraging economic interdependence. Thus 250 years ago the philosopher David Hume bemoaned the lack of economic cooperation among countries, blaming the "narrow malignity and envy of nations, which can never bear to see their neighbors thriving, but continually repine at any new efforts towards industry made by any other nation." In its efforts to ensure the distribution of power in its favor and at the expense of actual or potential rivals, a state will "nationalize"—that is, pursue autarkic policies, practicing capitalism only within its borders or among countries in a trading bloc. This circumscribes both production factors and markets, and thereby fragments an international economy.

A truly global economy is probably impossible to achieve. In fact, as the Princeton political economist Robert Gilpin has said, "what today we call international economic interdependence runs so counter to the great bulk of human experience that only extraordinary changes and novel circumstances could have led to its innovation and triumph over other means of economic exchange." Historically, to secure international capitalism a dominant power must guarantee the security of other states, so that they need not pursue autarkic policies or form trading blocs to improve their relative positions. This suspension of international politics through hegemony has been the fundamental aim of U.S. foreign policy since the 1940s. The real story of that policy is not the thwarting of and triumph over the Soviet threat but the effort to impose an ambitious economic vision on a recalcitrant world.

NURTURING—AND CONSTRAINING—THE FRAGILE BLOSSOM

THE overriding objective of U.S. postwar policy toward East Asia was restoring Japanese economic power. To be sure, this would help to immunize the region against Communist expansion; but Acheson and the other creators of the American Century thought the goal itself vital, regardless of the Soviet threat. As the historians William Borden, Bruce Cumings, Ronald McGlothlen, and Michael Schaller have argued, in attempting to create a global economic system Washington pursued a course designed in essence to restore the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere—imperial Japan's regional economy, which the United States had just destroyed in the Second World War. If Japan was to help fuel the world economy, it would have to be, in Acheson's words, "the workshop of Asia." American postwar planners viewed the political economy that had developed in Northeast Asia from about 1900 to 1945 as the region's natural economy—a tripartite system in which Japan, given access to continental markets and raw materials, formed the industrial core and its neighbors formed the economic semi-periphery and periphery. As Japan advanced in the product cycle, climbing up the technological ladder, it spun off its low-technology and low-wage industries to its neighbors.

In the late 1940s and the 1950s the United States essentially restored this system; but the machine could not run by itself. Washington had to ensure that Japan's neighbors would feel secure politically in the regional hierarchy atop which Japan stood. Washington also had to ensure that the hierarchy did not develop—as it had in the past—into a Japanese-led closed economic bloc, which would threaten the world economy. NSC 48, the National Security Council's 1949 blueprint for America's Cold War strategy in East Asia, summed up the chief difficulty facing Washington's economic goals in the region—and around the globe. Starting with the premise that "the economic life of the modern world is geared to expansion," requiring "the establishment of conditions favorable to the export of technology and capital and to a liberal trade policy throughout the world," NSC 48's authors went on to warn that "the complexity of international trade makes it well to bear in mind that such ephemeral matters as national pride and ambition can inhibit or prevent the necessary degree of international cooperation, or the development of a favorable atmosphere and conditions to promote economic expansion."

The distinguished historian and diplomat George Kennan, then the head of the State Department's policy-planning staff, saw only one solution to what he described as the "terrible dilemma" confronting U.S. ambitions in East Asia. Forty-seven years later Washington continues to pursue that course.

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Action Against Access.

> You have the terrific problem of how then the Japanese are going to get along unless they reopen some sort of Empire toward the South. Clearly we have got . . . to achieve opening up of trade possibilities, commercial possibilities for Japan on a scale very far greater than anything Japan knew before. It is a formidable task. On the other hand, it seems to me absolutely inevitable that we must keep completely the maritime and air controls as a means . . . of keeping control of the situation with respect to [the] Japanese in all eventualities. . . . [It is] all the more imperative that we retain the ability to control their situation by controlling the overseas sources of supply and the naval power and air power without which [Japan] cannot become again aggressive. . . .
>
> If we really in the Western world could work out controls, I suppose, adept enough and foolproof enough and cleverly enough exercised really to have power over what Japan imports in the way of oil and such other things as she has got to get from overseas, we would have veto power on what she does need in the military and industrial field.

By providing for Japan's security and by enmeshing its foreign and military policies in a U.S.-controlled alliance, Americans have contained their erstwhile enemy, preventing their "partner" from embarking upon independent—and, so the thinking goes, dangerous—political and military policies. By restraining its powerful ally, Washington has, to use a euphemism favored in policymaking circles, "reassured" Japan's neighbors and stabilized relations among the states of East Asia. The United States played the decisive role in promoting Tokyo's integration with its former colonies in Japan-centered regional trade networks that have been the foundation of East Asia's economic "miracle." South Korea and Taiwan, for example, overcame their fear and resentment of Japan and opened their doors to Japanese investment and trade.

In a series of revealing interviews published in 1970 the former undersecretary of state Eugene Rostow was pressed to explain the motivations underlying U.S. foreign policy generally and U.S. policy toward Vietnam specifically. In doing so he betrayed the lingering and profound distrust that U.S. policymakers feel toward any powerful state that could play a role in world politics more independent than the one the United States has assigned to it. At a time when America was involved in Southeast Asia ostensibly to draw a line against international communism, Rostow admitted, "I think the major concern—at least my major concern—in this miserable affair is the long-range impact a [U.S.] withdrawal would have on Japanese policy." He explained, "After the Japanese lost the war they reached certain conclusions, the principal one being that it was infinitely better to cooperate with the United States than to follow a hostile, militaristic line. Now, it's greatly to our interest to have that judgment proved correct." If the United States abruptly pulled out of Vietnam, Rostow went on, "I think the Japanese will draw certain conclusions. And I think their policy will take on a much more nationalistic cast. . . . I think the first thing that would happen would be that they wouldn't ratify the nuclear-non-proliferation treaty. They would feel compelled to become a nuclear power." This would endanger the imperative that America preserve "a world of wide horizons in which we can move around and trade and travel on a large scale."

THREE FOXES BY THE EDGE OF THE FIELD AT TWILIGHT

One ran,
her nose to the ground,
a rusty shadow
neither hunting nor playing.

One stood; sat; lay down; stood again.

One never moved,
except to turn her head a little as we walked.

Finally we drew too close,
and they vanished.
The woods took them back as if they had never been.

I wish I had thought to put my face to the grass.

We kept on walking,
speaking as strangers do when becoming friends.

There is more and more I tell no one,
strangers nor loves.
This slips into the heart
without hurry, as if it had never been.

And yet, among the trees, something has changed.

Something looks back from the trees,
and knows me for who I am.

—JANE HIRSHFIELD

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Nutrition Facts	Amount/Serving	% DV†	Amount/Serving	
Serv. Size: 1 oz. (28 g)	**Total Fat** 3.5 g	5%	Fiber 0 g	[illegible]
Servings VARIED	Sat. Fat 2 g	10%	Fiber 0 g	[illegible]
Calories 70	**Cholest.** 10 mg	3%	Sugars 0 g	
Fat. Cal. 30	**Sodium** 130 mg	5%	**Protein** 9 g	
†Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	Vitamin A 4% • Vitamin C 0% • Calcium 25% • Iron 0%			

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AMERICA AS "ADULT SUPERVISOR"

AMERICA'S Cold War policy is best understood not by its communism-containing words but by its ally-containing deeds. Washington committed itself to building and maintaining an international economic and political order based on what officials at the time termed a U.S. "preponderance of power." By banishing power politics and nationalist rivalries, America's Cold War alliances in East Asia and Europe in effect protected the states of those regions from themselves.

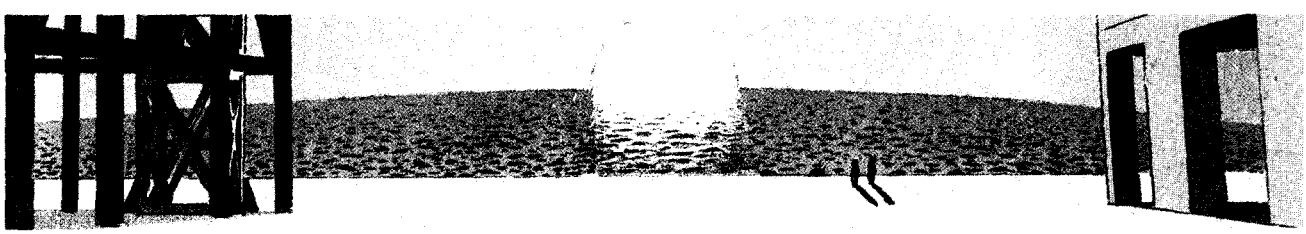
The United States has not subjugated colonies but, like Great Britain in the nineteenth century, has built and benefited economically from a stable international political order. In this way Lenin was right: imperialism is, or allows for, "the highest stage of capitalism"—an open economy among the industrialized nations.

By building this global economy the United States has realized what Lenin called "[the German socialist Karl] Kautsky's silly little fable about ultraimperialism." In the celebrated debate between Lenin and Kautsky, Lenin held that any international capitalist order was inherently temporary, since the political order among competing states would shift over time. Whereas Lenin argued that international capitalism thus could not transcend the Hobbesian reality of international politics, Kautsky maintained that capitalists were much too rational to destroy themselves in internecine conflicts. An international class of enlightened capitalists, recognizing that international political and military competition would upset the orderly processes of world finance and trade, would instead seek peace, free trade, and the cooperative development of backward areas.

But Lenin and Kautsky were talking past each other, since Kautsky believed that the common interest of what he called the "inter-capitalist class" determined international relations, whereas in Lenin's analysis international relations were founded not in social classes but in competition among states. Lenin argued that there was an irreconcilable contradiction between capitalism and the international system; Kautsky didn't recognize the division in the first place.

America's foreign policy has been based on a hybrid of Lenin's and Kautsky's analyses. It has aimed at the unified, liberalized international capitalist community Kautsky envisioned. But the global role that the United States has undertaken to sustain that community is determined by a worldview very close to Lenin's. To Washington, Baker's "global liberal economic regime" cannot be maintained simply by an internationalized economic elite's desire for it to exist; it can be maintained only by American power. Thus, in explaining its global strategy in 1993, in its "post–Cold War" defense strategy, the Pentagon defined the creation of "a prosperous, largely democratic, market-oriented zone of peace and prosperity that encompasses more than two-thirds of the world's economy" as "perhaps our nation's most significant achievement since the Second World War"—not the victory over Moscow. And it declared that this global capitalist order required the "stability" that only American "leadership" could provide. Ultimately, of course, U.S. policymakers and Lenin diverge. Although Lenin recognized that any given international political order was by its nature impermanent, America's foreign-policy strategists have hoped to keep the reality of international politics permanently at bay.

Although the Cold War has ended, what National Security Advisor Anthony Lake calls the "imperative of continued U.S. world leadership"—as exercised, for instance, in America's dominance of its alliances in East Asia and of NATO—remains necessary to maintain a global economy. The now-infamous draft of the Pentagon's defense plan, or the Defense Planning Guidance, which was leaked to *The New York Times* in 1992, gave the public an unprecedented glimpse of the thinking that informs Washington's security strategy, merely stating in somewhat undiplomatic language the logic behind America's Cold War strategy. The United States, it argued, must continue to dominate the international system and thus "discourage" the "advanced industrial nations from challenging our leadership or . . . even aspiring to a larger regional or global role." To accomplish this, America must do nothing less than "retain the pre-eminent responsibility for addressing . . . those wrongs which threaten not only our interests, but those of our allies or friends, or which could seriously unsettle international relations."



The United States, in other words, must provide what one of the Planning Guidance's authors termed "adult supervision." It must not only dominate regions composed of wealthy and technologically sophisticated states but also

take care of such nuisances as Saddam Hussein, Slobodan Milosevic, and North Korea's dictator Kim Jong Il, to protect the interests of virtually all potential great powers so that they need not acquire the capability to protect themselves—that is, so that those powers need not act like great powers. Thus, for instance, Washington must protect Germany's and Japan's access to Persian Gulf oil, because if these countries were to protect their own interests in the Gulf, they would develop military forces capable of global "power projection." No wonder the United States must spend more on its "national security" than the rest of the world's countries combined. This post–Cold War strategy reflects what the historian Melvyn Leffler defined as an imperative of America's Cold War national-security policy: that "neither an integrated Europe nor a united Germany nor an independent Japan must be permitted to emerge as a third force."

Only in this context can Washington's concerns regarding current developments in East Asia be properly understood. For instance, in 1993 Alberto Coll, then a deputy assistant secretary of defense, clarified U.S. aims in East Asia. "In the future," Coll declared in the *Washington Quarterly*,

> the stability of the Pacific Basin and a strong US-Japanese relationship will be more important to the United States than ever before. The US economy needs the vast markets of the Pacific Rim, and it benefits enormously from Japanese investment capital and technology and the impetus toward greater productivity provided by Japanese competition.

All these benefits would be lost, according to Coll, if the "traditional rivalries among Asian powers . . . unravel into unrestrained military competition, conflict and aggression." In the same vein the author of the Clinton Administration's security strategy for East Asia, Joseph Nye, then the assistant secretary of defense, asserted last year that the U.S. military protectorate is "the basis for stability and prosperity in the region"; if the United States were to forsake its "leadership role" in East Asia, "the stable expectations of entrepreneurs and investors [would] be subverted." Although the United States committed forces to Japan ostensibly to protect it from the Soviets, and to South Korea to protect it from the North, in 1993 the deputy defense secretary, William Perry (now the Secretary of Defense), declared that America would continue to reassure and stabilize East Asia by maintaining troops "permanently" in Japan and even in a future unified Korea.

THE DOMINO THEORY REVIVED

To Washington, East Asia is still composed of dominoes ready to fall. "Renationalization," a term used by the cognoscenti to mean the resumption of international politics, could start virtually anywhere and spread rapidly. In one of Aaron Friedberg's many nightmare scenarios one can almost hear the click of the falling dominoes:

> The nuclearization of Korea (North, South, or whether through reunification or competitive arms programs both together) could lead to a similar development in Japan, which might cause China to accelerate and expand its nuclear programs, which could then have an impact on the defense policies of Taiwan, India (and through it, Pakistan) and Russia (which would also be affected by events in Japan and Korea). . . . similar shock waves could also travel through the system in different directions (for example, from India to China to Japan to Korea).

Friedberg and other national-security analysts paint a similarly gloomy picture in Southeast Asia if, for example, Japan should undertake a military buildup in response to Korean reunification. Japan's reaction would alarm China—the emerging colossus, which U.S. defense planners now regard as the most serious potential long-term threat to America's global position. China would speed up the development of its "power projection" forces. This would alarm Korea, Taiwan, and Japan—and also Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam. Their defensive response would further alarm China.

Such developments, from Washington's perspective, would have one of two results, either of which would shatter the global economy: international anarchy, or regional dominance by China or Japan, which policymakers believe would lead inevitably to a regional trading bloc. Arguing in 1992 for the maintenance of America's leadership of its Cold War alliances, a high-ranking Pentagon official asked, "If we pull out, who knows what nervousness will result?" The problem, of course, is that America can never know. According to this logic, it must always stay.

To the United States, the best change in East Asia is no change at all, because any alteration in the status quo could start the dominoes falling. And if there is to be change, Washington—not Tokyo or Beijing—must manage it. To

After the Second World War, American statesmen believed that the United States, standing alone and strong in a world of weary nations, had a remarkable opportunity, as Dean Acheson said, to "grab hold of history and make it conform." Washington's dream of a world economy in which trade and capital flowed freely across national boundaries demanded the transformation of international relations.

permit otherwise would send a dangerous signal about America's diminishing ability to regulate, calibrate, and manipulate international politics in East Asia. Of course, Washington appreciates that change is inevitable, and its frustration comes from being unable to square the circle—to manage an increasingly unmanageable world.

Although the United States remains committed to preserving the Pax Americana in East Asia, the states in the region see U.S. influence inexorably declining, and they are planning accordingly. South Korea, for example, is reorienting its military away from an emphasis on the threat from the North and toward projecting power against a future threat from Japan by means of naval and air forces, submarines, spy planes, and satellites. The problem is that in prudently preparing for similar eventualities the East Asian states may indeed, as Washington fears, precipitate renationalization.

At a loss for what to do, U.S. policymakers propose two contradictory solutions. On the assumption that democracies are inherently peaceful toward one another, one solution goes, the United States should tranquilize East Asia by democratizing it. At the same time, the second solution has it, because only American dominance can ensure stability in the region (as in Europe), the United States should maintain its hegemony indefinitely. Leaving aside the question of whether either goal can be achieved, it should be clear that proposing these solutions is as inconsistent as simultaneously asserting, as do most in the U.S. national-security community, that although democracies pose no danger to other democracies, America must continue to contain Germany and Japan.

The hope and fear with which policymakers view economic change in East Asia illustrates the contradictory convictions that animate U.S. policy. Washington both heralds the economic dynamism of the Pacific Rim, hoping it will bring democracy and peace and worldwide economic growth, and dreads the Asian miracle. It knows that just as economic change engenders a shift in political and military power, so a particular economic order is jeopardized as the foundation upon which it rests—U.S. hegemony—weakens. In the oxymoronic vocabulary of U.S. diplomacy, strong "partners" are economically welcome and indeed necessary, but U.S. "leadership" is indispensable. Zbigniew Brzezinski, who developed the idea of a trilateral division of responsibility among the United States, Japan, and Europe, calls for Washington to develop "a more cooperative partnership" with Tokyo even as he asserts that America must continue to control Japan militarily.

LOSING GROUND

THERE is something at once poignant and obtuse in James Baker's comment that because President Clinton's foreign policy lacks consistency and firmness, "for the first time since the Second World War, Japan is not delivering an automatic vote for the US position." Sticking his head in the sand, the former Secretary of State claimed that such problems could be obviated "as long as America leads. . . . We have to lead." Japan's actions are certainly related to a decline in U.S. leadership, but that decline is not the fault of what Baker would characterize as Clinton's weak foreign policy. No matter who is in charge of U.S. foreign policy, America is less and less able to lead. Baker seems to have forgotten that America's leadership in the Gulf War was possible only because its allies agreed to pick up the tab. Given such leadership, it is no surprise that once-subservient "partners" are increasingly going their own way. Preponderance cannot simply be asserted; it must reflect a position based on power. When that position shifts enough, preponderance—"leadership"—is lost.

Lenin argued seventy-eight years ago that international capitalism would be economically successful but, by growing in a world of competitive states, would plant the seeds of its own destruction. Ironically, the worldwide economic system that the United States has fostered has itself largely determined America's relative decline even as it has contributed to the country's economic growth. Through trade, foreign investment, and the spread of technology and managerial expertise, economic power has diffused from the United States to new centers of growth, thus undermining American hegemony and ultimately jeopardizing the world economy.

Nearly everyone applauds today's complex web of global trade, production, and finance as the highest stage of capitalism. But international capitalism may be approaching a crisis just as it is reaching its fullest flower. A genuinely interdependent world market is extraordinarily fragile. The emergent high-technology industries, for instance, are the most powerful engines of world economic growth, but they require a level of specialization and a breadth of markets that are possible only in an integrated global economy. As U.S. hegemony continues to weaken, renationalized foreign and economic policies among the industrialized powers could fragment that economy.

The future of a foreign policy designed to strengthen what the United States must contain and, at the same time, to maintain an economic order that weakens the very foundation of that order seems evident: it will collapse under the weight of its own contradictions. The United States remains caught in the dilemma Kennan discerned more than forty years ago: "To what end 'security'? For the continuation of our economic expansion? But our economic expansion . . . cannot proceed much further without . . . creating new problems of national security much more rapidly than we can ever hope to solve them." To escape this dilemma, Americans will have to understand the foreign policy that is conducted in their name and re-examine the requirements for their own security and prosperity.

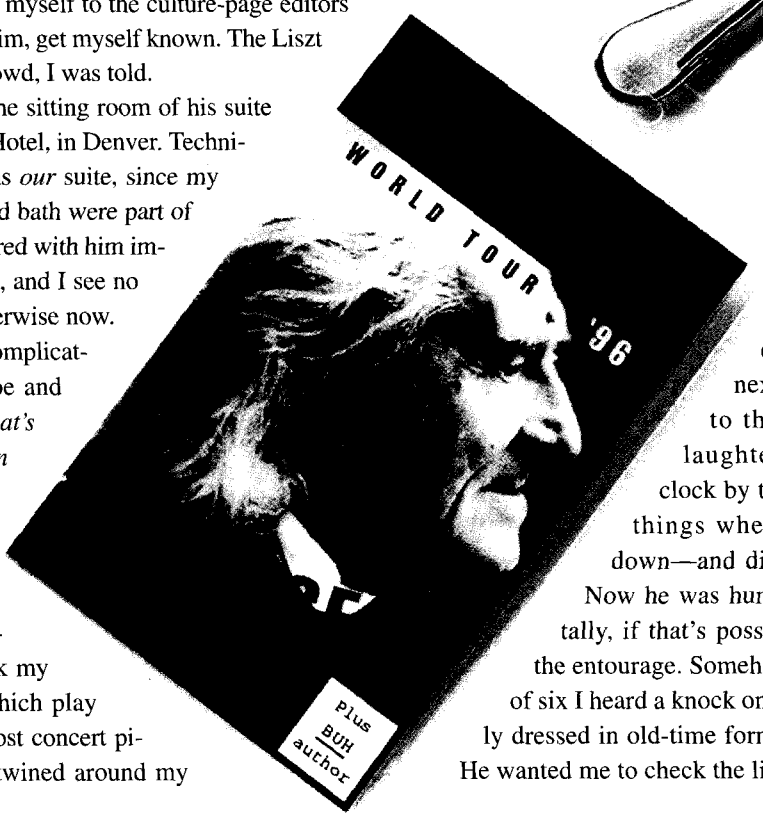
Accompanying Franz

by IAN FRAZIER

A book tour is hard enough on an author without competition from a genius out of the past

ONE of the most stuck-up guys I ever met is the piano virtuoso Franz Liszt. When I mention this, people always say, "But he's dead!" Try telling *him* that. I just finished a nine-week, twenty-nine-city book tour with the guy, and yes, he is old—he may even be "dead" (whatever that means)—but he is definitely one big pain. And when I say I was on a book tour, I flatter myself. It was supposed to be a tour to promote my most recent work of fiction, *Buh.* Well, instead it became one of these new "piggyback" tours that publishers are so crazy about these days, where they send an author along with an established performing artist, a surefire crowd-getter like the popular Herr Liszt. Don't look at me—I just do what they tell me: sit at a table in the concert-hall lobby, sign books, read a short selection during intermission (*What* intermission? The guy never comes up for air!), introduce myself to the culture-page editors waiting to interview him, get myself known. The Liszt crowd is a reading crowd, I was told.

I first met him in the sitting room of his suite in the Brown Palace Hotel, in Denver. Technically, of course, it was *our* suite, since my (smaller) bedroom and bath were part of it; but any space I shared with him immediately became his, and I see no reason to pretend otherwise now. He was smoking a complicatedly carved briar pipe and reading a copy of *What's Doing in Downtown Denver* supplied by the hotel. He hopped up on his long, wavery legs, introduced himself, and warmly took my hand. His fingers, which play tenths as easily as most concert pianists play octaves, twined around my wrist. I'd read in the publicity how "his sea-green eyes shone with rapid flashes like waves in flames," but that effect got by me somehow. Mainly what I was wondering was how he achieved that Gyro Gearloose flyaway look with his side hair. I went to my room to unpack, and when I returned, ten minutes later, the place was mobbed. Liszt fans were perched on the telephone table, the cabinet with the complimentary snack bar, and the window sills as he launched into a story about the time Edvard Grieg killed a spider with a piano stool—a recitation I was, unfortunately, to learn by heart. Bare-shouldered ladies sitting at his feet vied to rest their heads on his knees.



Talk about *party*! When does he ever sleep? I stood around on the fringes and tried to make conversation, but I was pretty beat from my flight. As I headed off to bed, he was ordering up baskets of champagne. I pulled a pair of those foam-rubbery hotel pillows around my ears to drown out the noise, and eventually I drifted off. The next I knew, I was wide awake to the sound of his uproarious laughter. I hunted for the digital clock by the bed—they never put those things where you can see them lying down—and discovered it was four-fifteen. Now he was humming loudly and contrapuntally, if that's possible, to merry applause from the entourage. Somehow I got back to sleep. At five of six I heard a knock on my door. There he stood, fully dressed in old-time formal clothes and a velvet cape. He wanted me to check the little button doohickeys behind

the knee on his knickers or knee breeches or whatever they were, to see if he'd got them buttoned right. I mean, *enough* already!

I'm not even going to discuss our first "event," it was such a nightmare. I held the fort at my table in the lobby and sold exactly two books, both of them to other writers who asked if they could send me manuscripts, as his SRO horde of screaming admirers strewed rose petals everywhere (the pink ones stain, by the way). I kept promising myself a big drink for later, and by the end of the evening it had grown to the size of a drink on a Hollywood billboard. I escaped at the first opportunity; after that the picture mercifully blurs.

LISZT hadn't played in public since 1886, so naturally a lot of anticipation had built up. We sat together on the flight to Salt Lake City; when we got off the plane, there were about 200 panting Lisztomanes waiting for him, and Art Knapp, from the Bookworm's mall store, waiting for me. If Art hadn't been holding up a copy of my book, I'd never have spotted him in the melee. (I can pick out that awful cover—why my agent didn't get us cover approval I'll never know—at 500 yards.) I hadn't checked any bags, so I just left Liszt to his fate and let Art lead me to his car. He asked how my tour was going so far, and I lied and said great. Then he asked who was that old fellow everyone was clamoring for. I wanted to grab him right there on the moving walkway and give him a kiss. Turned out he had never heard of him! Thank God there's still some sanity left in the land. But I hid my feelings and explained politely about the world-renowned nineteenth-century pianist and blah blah blah, as if I were an expert on the subject myself.

Later it got back to me that Liszt was really upset that I had run out on him at the airport. What was I supposed to do, trail along and hand out the smelling salts?

I couldn't help it. He just rubbed me wrong, constantly. Little things he did got on my nerves—the way he always said "*bitte*" after every question, for example. "Would you hold my garment case for a moment, *bitte*?" "I cannot fit this under my seat, so may I place it under yours, *bitte*?" I had to *bitte* my tongue not to tell him what he could do with his *bitte*. And those damn cookbooks he carried everyplace he went. He used to read recipes out loud to me and then ask, "Ahhh—doesn't that sound good?" And he ate Pez candies, the kind in the little dispenser. He was always popping one into his mouth. He has an amazing sweet tooth. What makes it worse is that he never puts on any weight! Any sweets I eat always go straight to my hips. But old Liszt is one of those skinny, hyper musician types we'd all secretly love to be. And I don't have to tell you how those guys do with women. Fantastic is how they do.

I mention this partly because of the chocolatier. In some airport or other Liszt met an attractive young chocolatier named Felice. We had stopped in a candy shop on the concourse to buy him his customary in-flight snack of two pounds of chocolate truffles. Felice, who waited on us, fell instantly, madly in love with him, closed up shop, bought a ticket, hopped on our flight, and was with us from then on. It happened that fast. Liszt was mad for her, too. And of course Felice absolutely hated me. *Hated* me. I think a lot of the problem had to do with the word "chocolatier." I just could never pronounce it to her satisfaction—in an introduction, for example. I realize it's a perfectly okay word, it's just not one I've had much occasion to use or am very comfortable with. Probably it bugged her that I always added "(French)" after it, to help people unfamiliar with its foreign origins. Liszt and Felice immediately got themselves his-and-hers matching everything. They pored over airline shopping catalogues and ordered expensive pen-and-pencil sets, executive stress-reducers, and pocket Breathalyzers, always by twos. In Dallas they bought identical luggage, which shouldn't have irritated me, but did. I came to dread seeing my own suitcase with the broken side zipper gaping forlornly amid their gleaming equipage on the baggage carousel. They always used porters—I prefer to carry mine—and they made out in taxicabs. Felice often recorded their conversations on a small tape recorder, which I noticed she turned off whenever I had something to say. Privately each told me how amazing and wonderful the other was. Of course all I could do was agree like an idiot.

I think Felice would have preferred that I disappear; many times I felt as if I already had. In the green room of the Spokane Civic Theater she absentmindedly handed me a stack of manila envelopes meant for the UPS man—I looked just like him, she blithely explained. I could have taken the hint and gone for a walk around the block for about two weeks, but I chose to remain emphatically where I was. This was my tour too. To pass the time I paced and cleared my throat a lot and popped my knuckles, even though I knew how nuts that drove her. I sat reading my own book, occasionally chuckling at the good parts. Liszt remained oblivious of the daggers Felice now looked at me whenever I was in the vicinity. He thought she and I would be fast friends, coming from the same century and all. Mutual misunderstanding, already serious, deepened further.

AT last I decided to get our conflicts out into the open. We were in the back of an airport limo, just the three of us, stuck in a traffic jam in Boise, Idaho, at seven o'clock in the morning. I looked out at the small creek of rainwater in the gutter, moving along faster than we were, and clarity seized me. "You know the real difference between you and me,

Franz Liszt photograph by Nadar, 1883, from the Mansell Collection; still photography by Bruno Debas

Franz?" I asked. He turned to me with the smallest acceptable amount of polite interest on his seamed, subtle face, but I continued. "I am quirky. That is my essence—quirk. By that I mean I'm just *me*, a self that is completely my own *sui generis* individual kind of personality. I have my own take on things, which is always slightly skewed and edgy. This is reflected in my writing, which is quirky, skewed, et cetera, as well."

I could see he had no idea what I was talking about. Felice, pretending to yawn and stretch, cuffed me on the side of the head.

"That's *me*; whereas *you*," I went on, heedless, "you invented the symphonic poem, made the piano the equivalent of an entire orchestra, played for more people than any musician in history, donated vast sums to charity, composed masterpieces of tonal experimentation far ahead of their time—but, no offense, you're not quirky. I am much quirkier than you. You do have your own take on things, I admit, but it is skewed only slightly if at all, nowhere near as skewed as mine. And as for edgy, I am sorry to have to tell you this, but you are not edgy in the least. Brilliant? Yes. Edgy? No way. In fact, it's remarkable we've gotten along as well as we have."

His sea-green eyes remained fixed on me in a look of complete bafflement. Later I found out that he had misheard me to say that I was "corky," and "corkier" than he was. Even if he'd heard me right, he wouldn't have understood. He came from a time when people actually had to know how to do stuff, or else they sat around all day burning peat or something, and there wasn't much call for high-end authors like me. I gave up trying to explain. But, oddly, Liszt didn't let the moment pass. He continued looking at me. Then he reached over, took my arm, and in that accent of his said, "Well, I'm sure you're a good egg!"

Felice brought out her cell phone and pulled up the antenna and began calling vanilla suppliers. The traffic eased, the rain stopped, airport billboards appeared up ahead. Liszt rolled down the window and idly ran through some fingerings on his knee. I sat back in an unexpected rush of contentment. No, I'm being coy—ecstasy would be more like it, quiet ecstasy. Franz Liszt called *me* a good egg! And here I had never said even one nice thing about his piano playing. I'm nearly tone-deaf, to begin with, and my idea of good music is weepy early-eighties rock-and-roll that *nobody* likes nowadays, by bands with geographic place-names. What a perfect blurb for my next book: "'A good egg'—Franz Liszt." I still can't get over it. Felice finished her phone call and stowed her phone, and our glances met. The absence of a sneer on her beet-red lips could almost have been called a smile.

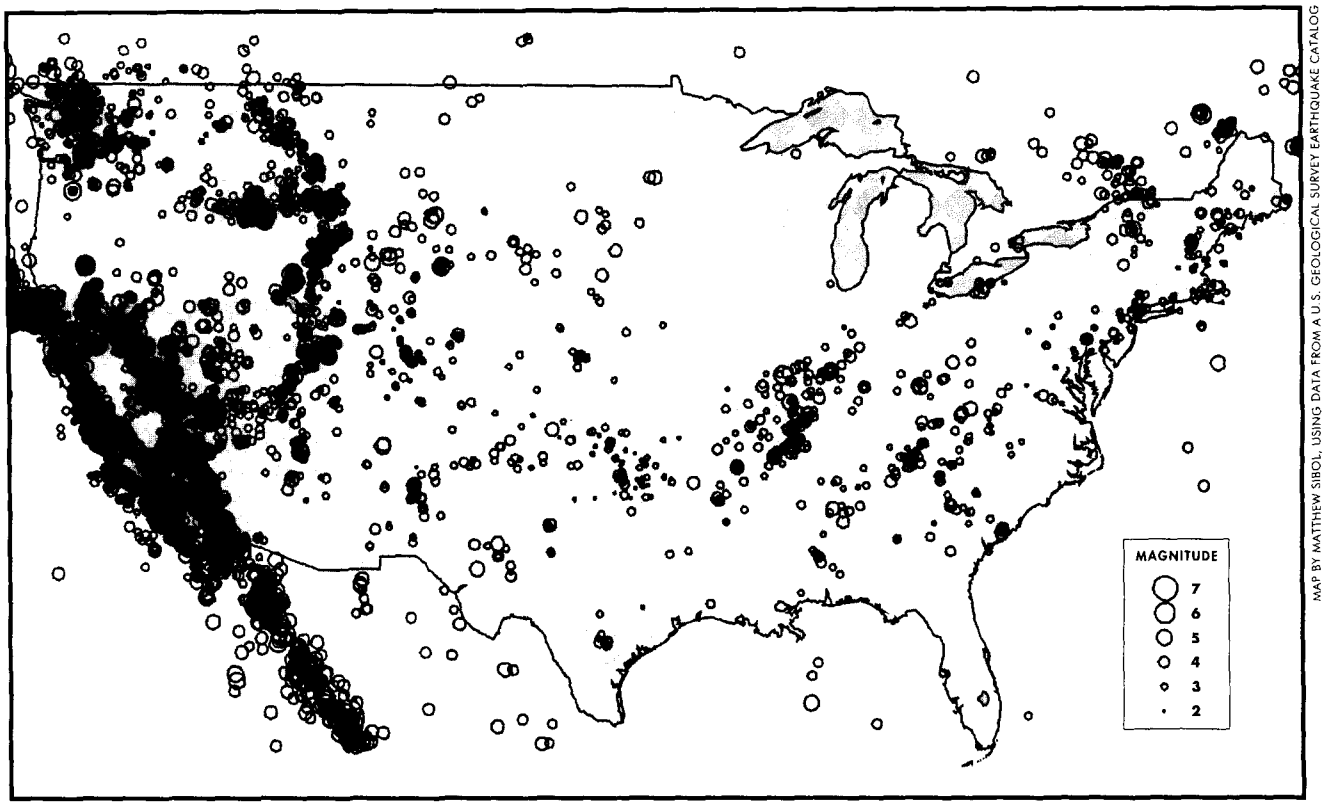
So I guess I have to take back some of what I've said. True, Liszt is a crazed egomaniac who believes that all the world is secondary to his towering genius. And true, he does sometimes trample the rights of others in the Preferred Customer lines, so you nearly get into fights. All the same, he's not a hundred percent bad. Old "Fist Full of Keys" Franz knows a lot more than he lets on. I mean, let's put ourselves in his position: he's been "dead" in a technical sense for more than a hundred years, and none of his friends are around anymore. He gets lonely. Of course he retreats into his celebrity and his music. Wouldn't you? Yet with all the sadness he has to keep bottled up, he still considers the other fellow's feelings—mine, for example. Soon after our exchange in the airport limo he invited me to sit in with him at a recording session at the studios of Deutsche Grammophon. Yes, that's me playing the triangle in the new version of *Danse Macabre*—you can just barely hear it. He wrote the part especially for me, and I was thrilled. We even jammed a little—after the tapes had stopped rolling, of course. He didn't have to do that, and I appreciated it.

As for my book, it ended up selling pretty well, especially to people in the business. To my (pleasant) surprise, the publisher turned out to be right about the tour. Much as it graveled me always to be "the guy with Liszt," the backup interview, or the "In Brief" item or sidebar piece, I did get a decent amount of coverage out of the deal. Interviewers seemed to like it when I said that if I weren't a writer, I'd probably be either dead or in jail. I don't know why, but they always quoted that line, leaving out that it isn't really true. I personally know a lot of people who bought the book, sometimes more than one copy, and obviously there are many others I don't know about, which would increase the figure. I just received a royalty statement on the sales, but I won't go into a whole long analysis of it now. I'll merely mention that line seventeen of the statement, identified as "Line Fifteen Minus Line Sixteen," shows an amount over $7,000. That is either what I owe the publisher or what the publisher owes me—quite a respectable number for a work of fiction, in any event.

Franz Liszt's place in history is already secure, and he will go on to make it even better. This time when he's reached his goals there won't be anyone who can touch him, ever. He and Felice just bought a place in Encino, and they divide their time between there and his native Hungary. He has a new tour planned, with race-car driver turned author Mario Andretti, which will be far bigger than the one I was on. They're looking at new venues on the NASCAR summer circuit, which would be way, way beyond my league but not beyond Liszt's, and more power to him. Having seen him myself in concert, I can promise that he owns the three essentials for any performer: he makes you laugh, he makes you cry, and he scares the hell out of you. No audience could ask for more. In Berlin back in 1841 people went so wild for him that they threw themselves under the wheels of his carriage—a trifle, I predict, compared with what's going to happen here. Despite everything that went down between him and me in the past, I'll be rooting for him all the way.

Perpetual Motion

Earthquake Activity 1974–1993



MAP BY MATTHEW SIBOL, USING DATA FROM A U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY EARTHQUAKE CATALOG

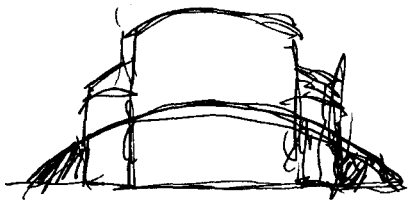
COUNTING only those earthquakes that register a magnitude of 2.0 or greater on the Richter scale, there are more than two quakes a day, on average, in the lower forty-eight states. Although it takes a quake of 5.5 or greater to cause significant damage to buildings, a 2.0 quake will still give a rude jolt to people within a few miles of its epicenter.

The states along the Pacific coast, of course, have the highest concentration of quakes, because the fault lines that run through this region constitute a boundary between two giant tectonic plates: the North American plate and the Pacific plate. Four of the five largest quakes during the twenty-year period covered by this map were in California or off its coast.

But seismic activity is also common in places far away from this plate boundary. A prominent band of earthquakes extends northward from Nevada to Montana, in a zone between deformed rocks and stable rocks which has been active periodically for the past 600 million years. Another band of earthquake activity extends westward from Yellowstone National Park. The cause of these earthquakes, and of the unusual volcanic activity at Yellowstone, is the presence of a "hot spot"—a pipe of molten rock that blasts its way up to the surface. (Pressure from this molten rock was so intense from 1923 to 1984 that it gradually raised the park's elevation by three feet.)

Earthquakes that occur east of the Rocky Mountains are probably associated with ancient geological structures formed as a result of past plate-tectonic activity. For example, 600 million years ago North America attempted to split apart into two continents along the present location of the Mississippi River, and as a result the crust is cut by thousands of ancient faults. A prominent zone of activity near the border between Missouri and Tennessee produced three of the most violent earthquakes on record, in 1811 and 1812. New England, which is characterized by persistent but scattered quakes, has experienced at least two quakes of 6.0 or greater since the early 1800s. Although most earthquake-related attention focuses on the West Coast, it is entirely possible that the country's next major quake may strike somewhere in the East.

Is any part of the country safe from earthquakes? Judging by data from the past three centuries, the safest places are eastern Texas and Florida. —*Christine Powell*



Left, an early sketchbook drawing of Ozawa Hall by the architect

Sounds as Good as It Looks

Seiji Ozawa Hall, at Tanglewood, is modeled on the world's few great concert halls

by Witold Rybczynski

THE story of the Boston Symphony Orchestra's new Seiji Ozawa Hall, at Tanglewood, in western Massachusetts, reads like a Hollywood movie—a movie by Frank Capra, not Oliver Stone. A famous big-city symphony orchestra decides to build a new concert hall at its rural summer facility, in addition to the one where the full orchestra performs. This hall will accommodate students, serve as a summer recording studio, and, most of all, be a perfect place to hear chamber music, small ensembles, and the student orchestra. An architect must be found to create a beautiful building—one that not only looks good but also sounds good. A list of prospective architects is drawn up. It consists of the most celebrated practitioners in the country and, because this is an orchestra that believes in blind auditions for unseasoned musicians, several young up-and-comers. Finally seven architects are invited to be interviewed. (Here is an opportunity for several cameo roles. Let us cast Brian Dennehy, who was the convincing star of Peter Greenaway's *The Belly of an Architect,* and Richard Gere, who also once wielded a T square on film.) Gruff and rumpled, handsome and Armani-suited, the architects make their presentations to the orchestra committee, displaying portfolios bulging with photographs of impressive museums, dramatic corporate headquarters, and, of course, eye-popping concert halls.

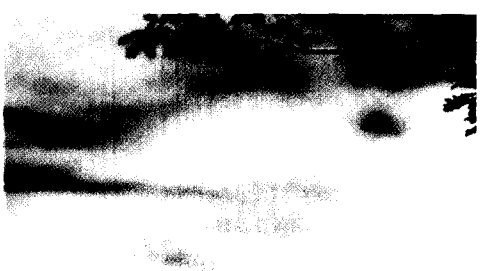
Surprisingly, one of the unseasoned newcomers is among the chosen seven. (Tom Hanks has the Jimmy Stewart role.) He is hampered by never having built a concert hall, so he shows his latest project instead—affordable housing on the waterfront. Then he makes a fer-

Photographs by Steve Rosenthal

vent speech about the rural site of the new hall—its landscape, its spirit, its ambiance. He talks about the kind of building he thinks the orchestra needs: open, informal, yet reflecting the intensity of the music. It shouldn't overpower the place, he warns, and he calls it a background building. (This is a fine set piece: the earnest and impassioned architect confronting the attentive but skeptical committee of civic leaders, retired businessmen, and wealthy socialites.) Finally our hero returns to his office. He is dejected. The committee appeared interested, but what chance does he have against the architectural stars?

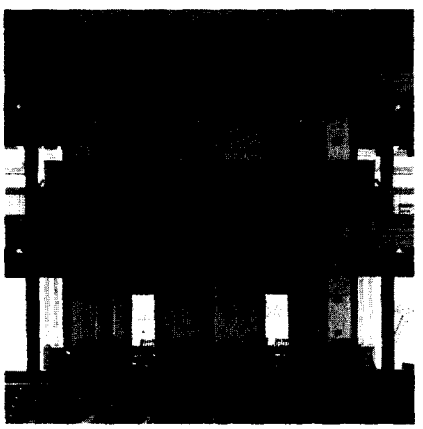
Meanwhile, everyone on the symphony committee has his or her own favorites. The chairman suggests an informal poll, with each member writing two names on a slip of paper. When the ballots are read, there is general surprise at the discovery that only one candidate appears as the first or second choice on every single ballot: Hanks. After more deliberation the final choice is made. It is, of course, our hero.

Below, the hall at dusk: right, detail of teak balcony screens and railings



As in every Capra movie, the outcome is predictable, but that's the appeal.

The architect travels to Europe to visit famous concert halls. Together with the acoustician (Charles Grodin in the costarring role), he develops a design. The building goes up. It certainly looks impressive, but how will it sound? After the rehearsal the musicians seem happy. It's going to be fine, Grodin says. But that



prognosis is based on an empty hall—how will it sound with an audience at the opening gala? More to the point, how will it sound to influential music critics? Cut to opening night, when we see the critic for *The New York Times* among the concertgoers (Edward Rothstein plays himself). The music starts. The critic sits concentrating intently, his brow furrowed. He looks slightly irritated. During the intermission he gets up and moves to another seat. We start to get nervous—will this be a movie with a fashionably unhappy ending?

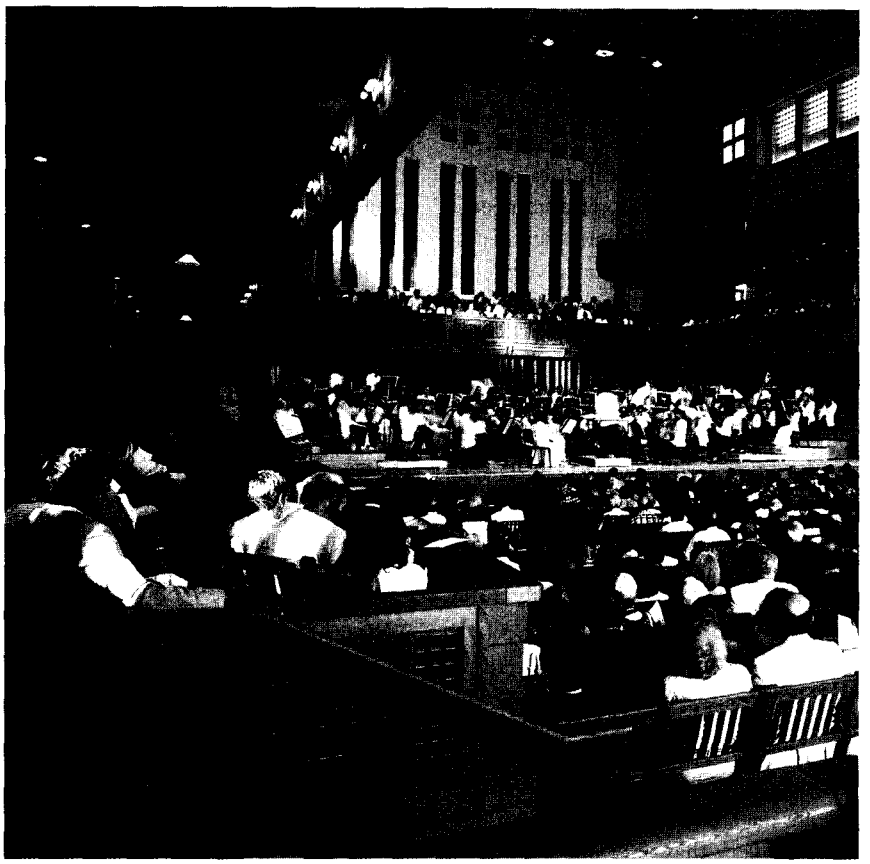
The next day Hanks and Grodin read Rothstein's review. "Precisely what a concert hall should be," Rothstein writes. "It is rare for a new hall to begin its career with such a mature, seasoned character." The movie ends with a reprise of the closing of the gala concert and the music of Randall Thompson's *Alleluia*, an unaccompanied chorus with the audience joining in. The camera pulls back from the stage, across the heads of the singing people, and through the great doors at the rear of the hall to the outside lawn, where more people sit and sprawl on the grass. As the camera rises, we see the dark silhouettes of the rolling hills on the horizon. Below us the warm glow of

the light spilling out the doors identifies the concert hall. The patch of light glows smaller as the credits begin to roll.

THE critical reception of the acoustical qualities of Seiji Ozawa Hall, designed by the architect William L. Rawn III, has been consistently favorable, although Rothstein did have a quibble about "too much being shaved off the top frequencies." After the first season the hall's acoustician, R. Lawrence Kirkegaard, ordered the removal of an eighth of an inch of the absorptive cellulose fiber that covered the ceiling, and the sound was judged to be improved. Such tinkering is not uncommon in a new hall. What is unusual is for the sound of a new concert hall to be so widely praised: the reaction to new halls has frequently been lukewarm if not downright hostile. It is usually the old halls that are loved and admired.

A case in point is Boston's Symphony Hall, which is generally held to be the first hall in whose design the science of acoustics played a role. It was built at the turn of the twentieth century and designed by the great architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White, working in their full-blown Italian Renaissance mode and with the assistance of Wallace Clement Sabine, a professor of physics at Harvard and the father of modern architectural acoustics. The music critic for the Boston *Evening Transcript* was not impressed, however: after the inaugural concert he wrote that "the tone was beautifully smooth . . . but it had no life, there was nothing commanding and compelling about it." Nevertheless, Symphony Hall has become known precisely for its exceptional sound. "Even the first time that I conducted there, I was struck by its acoustics," Bruno Walter said thirty-five years ago. "It is the most noble of American concert halls." Herbert von Karajan was still more effusive, going so far as to say that Symphony Hall was better for much music than the Grosser Musikvereinssaal, in Vienna—considered by many to be the best hall in the world.

Of course, "the best hall in the world" is a slippery concept, since settings for music have changed considerably over time—as has music itself. Baroque orchestral music was played in small rooms that had a relatively short (less than 1.5 seconds) "reverberation time"—



An orchestra concert from the perspective of a loge box

the length of time that sound gives the impression of lingering as a result of being reflected by hard surfaces. Short reverberation times are ideal for intimate and highly defined music. Sacred music, such as Bach's early fugues, was often written to be performed in small private chapels whose reverberation times were relatively short. Some choral works, on the other hand, were staged in larger churches, and took advantage of the more reverberative spaces. During the Classical period the music of Haydn and Mozart was performed in what were the first concert halls. Although these halls were small by modern standards, and sat only several hundred people, the reverberation times were longer than those in private chapels—1.5 to 1.7 seconds. The popularity of orchestral music during the second half of the nineteenth century brought a new generation of larger concert halls. The Musikvereinssaal, for example, opened in 1870 and has 1,680 seats. Such halls have longer reverberation times (1.9 to 2.2 seconds), with fuller tones but slightly lower definition, which complements the music of Romantic composers like Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and Richard Strauss.

The music of the twentieth century is more varied in its demands, and any hall in which the work of composers ranging from Bach to Górecki is performed requires a compromise. Nevertheless, there is a surprising amount of agreement about which are the best-sounding concert halls. Most musicians, critics, and concertgoers would probably include not only Vienna's Musikvereinssaal and Boston's Symphony Hall but also Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and New York's Carnegie Hall. A systematic study of these and other halls is contained in the recently published *Concert and Opera Halls: How They Sound*, a vastly revised and enlarged edition of the now-classic study *Music, Acoustics & Architecture,* which was originally published in 1962. The author is Leo L. Beranek, an acoustician based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, who is a founder of what has become probably the world's leading firm of acoustical consultants—Bolt, Beranek and Newman.

Beranek, an amateur musician, visited sixty-six famous concert halls and ten opera houses around the world. He lis-

tened to performances, measured reverberation times, and studied blueprints. He polled concertgoers and talked to music critics. He also interviewed musicians, including Charles Munch, Leopold Stokowski, Leonard Bernstein, Von Karajan, and Walter. Eugene Ormandy told him, "In my many years as a conductor, this is the first time anyone has come to me to ask my opinion about acoustics." Beranek accorded his top rating, "superior," to only the Musikvereinssaal, Symphony Hall, and the Concertgebouw. He described an additional six concert halls as "excellent": Basel's Stadt-Casino, Berlin's Konzerthaus (formerly Schauspielhaus), Cardiff's St. David's Hall, New York's Carnegie Hall, Tokyo's Hamarikyu Asahi, and Zurich's Grosser Tonhallesaal. The rest of the halls he consigned to lesser categories, although he was diplomatic enough not to give a detailed ranking.

Why do old halls sound better than new ones? To a large extent it is a question of shape. The Musikvereinssaal (1870), the Concertgebouw (1888), and Symphony Hall (1900) all have a shoebox shape, and so do four of the six halls in the "excellent" category. (St. David's Hall is hexagonal in plan, and Carnegie Hall is rectangular but not a traditional shoebox.) In a typical shoebox the orchestra is at one end, and the seats are on the floor and in one gallery extending along the sides and across the opposite end. Sound is reflected to the listener from the two long sides, which are about sixty to eighty feet apart, and also from the ceiling. Because the concertgoer is relatively close to the musicians, the atmosphere is intimate, visually and acoustically.

The majority of concert halls built during the twentieth century have departed from the successful shoebox formula. Why? One reason is a need for greater seating capacity; another is higher standards of comfort and safety. Basel's Stadt-Casino has only 1,448 seats. Many contemporary concert halls, especially in America, where orchestras rely more on box-office receipts than on government subsidies, approach 3,000. To bring the rear seats closer to the stage, halls have been made wider or fan-shaped. This sacrifices some of the acoustical qualities of the shoebox, especially the ability to reflect bass notes from the side walls. Audience capacity may not, however, be the main reason for the change. After all, Symphony Hall, the largest of the shoeboxes, accommodates as many as 2,625 concertgoers—about the same as Lincoln Center's Philharmonic Hall, which opened in 1962, and which had an untraditional shape. So perhaps architects' willful desire to reinvent the wheel is also part of the explanation.

Because Ozawa Hall was to be small—seating was not to exceed 1,200—it could follow the tried-and-true models. "The shoebox shape was identified very early," says Kirkegaard, who trained at Harvard as an architect and was the acoustician responsible for the 1989 corrections to the 1986 remodeling of Carnegie Hall. He apprenticed with Bolt, Beranek and Newman at the time the firm was struggling with the acoustical shortcomings of Philharmonic Hall. (The sound in Philharmonic Hall proved so bad that the interior was gutted and Avery Fisher Hall, a classic shoebox, was put in its place.) "The Boston Symphony musicians love their hall, and all their favorite concert halls were that shape," Kirkegaard says. On his European tour Rawn was especially impressed by the architectural presence of the Musikvereinssaal and Berlin's Konzerthaus, another nineteenth-century shoebox, designed by the great neoclassical architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel (and rebuilt to the original plans after the Second World War). Ozawa Hall is seventy feet wide, 140 feet long, and fifty feet high, about the same size as the Musikvereinssaal; it has two side balconies, like Symphony Hall. One feature of Ozawa Hall is unique: much of the rear wall consists of doors that slide open, permitting another 2,000 concertgoers to listen to the music on the gently sloping lawn outside, thanks to a sophisticated sound system that mirrors the hall's acoustics for the outdoor listeners.

Concert and Opera Halls concludes with three general observations: small halls generally sound better than large halls; halls built for a single purpose are superior to multi-purpose halls; and old halls sound better than new ones. These observations obviously influenced the design of Seiji Ozawa Hall. The new hall was being built as a replacement for a wooden structure called The Theatre, built in 1941 to a design by Eliel and Eero Saarinen. The Theatre had served

for both opera and concert music; since 1962 it had been used only for rehearsal. The initial plan was to accommodate both types of programming. However, "as the design progressed, Bill Rawn slowly but firmly steered us to the conviction that a hall designed uniquely for concert music was the best solution," Daniel R. Gustin, the manager of Tanglewood, recalls. This avoided the complexity—and the cost—of an orchestra pit, a room for scenery, and other backstage facilities. (Some of the funding was diverted toward restoring The Theatre, so that opera can be staged there.) And, as we shall see, a concert hall can benefit from the lack of a proscenium stage.

Another lesson that old concert halls teach concerns construction. Their walls and ceilings were usually plaster applied directly to heavy brick or stone; there was relatively little wood. Massive walls sustain a low-frequency bass response, unlike hollow walls and lightweight wood paneling, which tend to reflect only the treble notes. Although the interior of Ozawa Hall has a lot of exposed wood (teak), it is confined to the seats and the balcony railings; the walls are stucco over very thick masonry, and the ceiling consists of heavy concrete coffers. The result is, as Rothstein put it in his review, "a resonant, warm space that comes to life with sound."

THE enjoyment of music in a concert hall is not only the auditory result of construction, dimensions, and shape. Architecture, too, plays an important role. If the new hall is traditional in its overall internal arrangement, it is much less so in its decor: Rawn's respect for the past does not extend to the use of classical architectural language. There is no figurative ornament here, no statuary as in Symphony Hall, no caryatids supporting the balconies as in the Musikvereinssaal, no crystal chandeliers as in the Stadt-Casino. But neither is this a cold, abstract modernist interior, like the recently constructed Opéra Bastille in Paris, of which the soprano June Anderson has said, "The place looks like a gymnasium."

Ozawa Hall certainly doesn't look like a gymnasium. Some have likened it to a Quaker meetinghouse or a New England town hall. There is certainly an air of gathering here. In doing away with the proscenium that is common to so many American concert halls, pulling the stage into the main body of the hall, and in placing some of the audience beside and even behind the musicians (as at the Concertgebouw), Rawn has given concertgoers the feeling of being participants. The teak grilles that make up the balcony railings remind me of yacht gratings, and the seats, which are mainly movable chairs, recall the deck furniture on a cruise ship. If this is a Quaker meetinghouse—and there is a sense of artlessness in the unembellished forms—it is one whose frugality is tempered by hints of boating, and leisure, and summer vacations. My only quibble is that the decor is almost too refined: one misses the makeshift, camplike quality of the other buildings at Tanglewood.

The exterior shape of the building recalls Symphony Hall, except that the roof is gently curved instead of pitched and the lower flanking wings have open porches instead of solid walls. Because the main hall is brick and the structure of the porches is heavy timber (recycled from old wharves and trestle bridges), the overall effect is of an industrial building—a nineteenth-century mill, say, of the kind that one can still see in many small Massachusetts towns. That sounds unusual, but Tanglewood itself is an odd combination of urban culture and country setting, of intensity and informality.

WHEN I visited Bill Rawn's office, in downtown Boston, he showed me one of the sketchbooks he kept during his European tour of concert halls. Now, many architects keep such visual diaries. What struck me about Rawn's sketchbook was that although it contained the usual thumbnail drawings, there were also pages and pages of written notes. Obviously he had been looking and listening, but he had also been thinking. Contemporary architecture can represent a range of qualities: refinement, excitement—even, in the case of much deconstructivist work, angst. It is rare, however, to come across an architect whose work can be described, first and foremost, as intelligent. I think this is probably what impressed the Boston Symphony Orchestra committee, and led them to make a choice that must have seemed risky at the time. A bold client, an intelligent architect, and a perceptive acoustician—that is a Hollywood script indeed.

A Visionary Poet at Ninety

What's all this about poets in their youth beginning in "gladness" but ending in "despondency and madness"? William Wordsworth, meet Stanley Kunitz

by David Barber

PASSING THROUGH: The Later Poems, New and Selected

by Stanley Kunitz. W. W. Norton, 159 pages, $18.95.

It is a melancholy fact that poets seldom sustain their creative vigor and prowess into great old age. The reasons for this are both self-evidently actuarial and curiously inscrutable. By the time Walt Whitman came to be hailed as the "good gray poet," complete with photogenic Old Testament beard, he was virtually a poet emeritus, occupying himself with writing "annexes" for *Leaves of Grass* under the doleful rubrics "Sands at Seventy" and "Goodbye My Fancy." William Wordsworth, the longest-lived of his storied generation of English Romantics, appraised the dire effects of the aging process on those in his line of work in a couplet that has since come to have a proverbial ring: "We Poets in our youth begin in gladness; / But thereof come in the end despondency and madness."

That sounds gloomy beyond the call of duty. Still, it succinctly lays out one plausible hypothesis for the high incidence of burnout among poets of a certain age. Ample supporting evidence for the Wordsworthian position can be had by thumbing the anthologies that make a clerical fetish of listing dates of composition: the numbers suggest that a bitter dotage is more often than not a self-imposed sentence, the fateful consequence of extravagant ambition or of a prematurely autumnal disposition. Throw in the scourges of obscurity, the blandishments of reputation, and the capriciousness of taste, common occupational hazards all, and it can seem a wonder that any poet would go to heroic measures to ward off disillusionment. Just as telling, perhaps, are the concessions one finds even a grand old lion like William Butler Yeats making to diminishing returns and dimming powers. "Now that my ladder's gone," Yeats signed off famously in one of his last poems, "The Circus Animals' Desertion," "I must lie down where all the ladders start / In the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart."

Despondency and madness? Rags and bones? Is that all that a poet has to look forward to at the end of the day? Ironically, it is Yeats himself who may be readily adduced by those who cherish hopes for a more sanguine outcome. When T. S. Eliot delivered the first annual Yeats Lecture at Dublin's Abbey Theatre, shortly after the Irish poet's death, he made a special point of lauding

Illustrations by David Johnson

the drive and stamina that Yeats mustered in producing some of his most vital work in his seventh and eighth decades. As against the greater share of poets, whose "writing becomes an insincere mimicry of their earlier work" or who "leave their passion behind, and write only from the head, with a hollow and wasted virtuosity," the older Yeats, Eliot declared, stands as "a great and permanent example—which poets-to-come should study with reverence."

Nor is Yeats the only one. Thomas Hardy, Pablo Neruda, Czeslaw Milosz, Robert Penn Warren, and William Carlos Williams all leap to mind as elder poets whose late or last work elicits unqualified esteem, leaving one to conclude, all things considered, that maybe the ranks are not so very sparse after all. And then there is the great and permanent example of Stanley Kunitz, who not only has continued to write poems of a startling richness at an advanced age but has arguably saved his best for last. Remarkable enough that a poet would publish a collection at ninety, as Kunitz did last fall, and yet it's a measure of the man that bowing to his eminence would amount to an impertinence. What *Passing Through* confirms, beyond the faintest suggestion of charity, is that the venerable doyen of American poetry is still a poet in his prime.

THE century—the American Century, as Henry Luce would later coronate it—was new when Stanley Kunitz was born, and in most respects it had yet truly to begin. Kunitz's home town of Worcester, Massachusetts, an industrial Sparta located some forty miles west of Boston's self-proclaimed Athens, had been a regular stop on the New England lyceum circuit in the second half of the nineteenth century, and for a precocious child of Kunitz's generation there must have been plenty of lingering ghosts in the air: illustrious Transcendentalists such as Emerson and Thoreau, eminent Victorians such as Charles Dickens and Matthew Arnold, the abolitionist hero Frederick Douglass, all of whom had barnstormed through town and brought out the throngs.

By the time Kunitz was a schoolboy, of course, the genies of the modern age were out of the bottle. The late Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, he of the spread-

ing chestnut tree and the forest primeval, may still have been cherished in the sitting rooms of Worcester, but his days as a pillar of national letters were clearly numbered. Ezra Pound and his cohort would see to that, and they were already turning out poems and broadsides that spoke of accelerated expectations and manifest destinies every bit as forcefully as did Teddy Roosevelt's flashing spectacles and gleaming incisors.

If artistic temperament could be reduced to the handy coordinates of time and place, then Kunitz by all rights should have made his name as a poet bent on making things new, in sync with a nation that was just then beginning to stretch its limbs as a political power and to wrench its literary culture once and for all free of Europe's. As it happened, this offspring of immigrants from Lithuania's Jewish shtetls went on to become a stubbornly American poet of singular intuitions and convictions, one determined to write, as he would reflect decades later, in a lyric vein that would thrust him into "the thick of life . . . caught in the dangerous traffic between self and universe." In vivid contrast to the two other notable American poets who were born in Worcester, though a few years later, Kunitz found his true pitch not in scrupulous reserve and ironic distance (Elizabeth Bishop), not in boisterous epic sweep and nativist sentiment (Charles Olson), but in pensive, prayerful utterance. Neither radical nor reactionary, answering to no mandarin aesthetic or modernist insurrection, Kunitz's poetry has kept its own lonely counsels, austere of bearing and constrained in form, yet uninhibited in its depth of human sympathy and tragic feeling. What has emerged from this monkish discipline is poetry rooted in the American meditative vernacular and at the same time reaching back to an Old World oracular tradition of incantation and lamentation—that, and an unnerving strain of astringent grandeur that is entirely Kunitz's own.

For a writer whose working life spans thirteen Presidents and perhaps as many literary zeitgeists, Kunitz's steadfastness is all the more extraordinary. No poet of stature has proved less quixotic or less profligate, and it's hard to think of many who have paced themselves so well. Few have been as resistant to the long poem and the epic conception, those bogeys that have devoured so many American poets, and perhaps only the famously fastidious Bishop showed any greater immunity to fever dreams of productivity. It would be a mistake, however, to equate this reticence with diffidence. What Kunitz's work lacks in glamour and commotion it compensates for in serious and decisive purpose. That no shelf will ever groan under Kunitz's collected poetry is a measure of his daunting ambition as well as of his scrupulous restraint.

"Poets are always revisiting the state of their innocence, as if to be renewed by it," Kunitz has written, yet that sounds more wishful than true of his own star-crossed upbringing. His childhood household was a conspicuously matriarchal one, his father having taken his own life six weeks before the son's birth, and his mother remaining unbending in her edict that her husband's name not be uttered in her presence ("She locked his name / in her deepest cabinet / and would not let him out, / though I could hear him thumping," Kunitz writes in "The Portrait"). Raised largely by nursemaids, free to roam the wooded countryside and haunt the public library and the art museum, he turned that independence to good advantage and went on to a stellar career at Harvard, from which he graduated summa cum laude in 1926.

At Harvard, Kunitz was recognized as a promising scholar and a precocious poet, but when his hopes for a faculty position at the college were dashed by the administration's veiled but inescapable intimation that his Jewish ancestry would make any such appointment impossible, he bitterly renounced academic life. The years of peripatetic and hard-pressed living that followed (as a reporter in Worcester, an editor in New York, and later, during the Depression, a small farmer in Connecticut and Pennsylvania) did not, however, stifle his private writing life, and in 1930 he published his first volume of poetry, *Intellectual Things*. The poems were dense, fiercely wrought, intricately figured—and for their day rather beyond the pale. They gave the impression of owing more to the metaphysicals than to the moderns and of being nourished on a Yeatsian diet of eroticized mysticism. Formally accomplished, they were nonetheless humming with a cathartic energy that set them apart from the dominant strains of American lyric poetry: the shrewd vernacular mode of Robert

Frost, the cool, allusive vein of Eliot, and the linguistic legerdemain of Wallace Stevens.

The poems in *Intellectual Things* and in Kunitz's similarly pitched subsequent volume *Passport to the War* (1944) were not calculated to suit the taste of the literary establishment. Still, their intensity did catch the notice of his peers, particularly those at odds with the lofty postures of the high moderns. His younger contemporary Theodore Roethke, who was in the midst of his own revolt against the emotionally distanced verse then in favor, was an early ally and for a time the reclusive Kunitz's only link to the active guild of letters. Reading these early pieces now (a healthy selection can be found in *The Poems of Stanley Kunitz 1928–1978*), one can't help being struck by their extremity of feeling, which seems both to hark back to the harnessed passion of English poets such as George Herbert and John Donne and to anticipate the jangled idiom of exposed nerves that poets like Robert Lowell and John Berryman would popularize a generation later. Even so, these qualities were liabilities in a period that still looked to such polished cosmopolitans as Eliot and W. H. Auden for its gold standard in poetry. By his early fifties Kunitz seemed destined at best to remain that poor forked thing, a poet's poet.

All that changed with a thunderclap in 1958, with the publication of Kunitz's *Selected Poems 1928–1958*, which assembled a powerful group of some thirty new poems alongside many from his two previous collections. The book was awarded the 1959 Pulitzer Prize in poetry, and assured Kunitz an acclaim that now seems less overdue than necessarily long-ripening. Virtually from that moment on he has been not only one of the most widely admired figures in contemporary poetry but also, rarer still, a true ambassador of his art: a revered teacher for many years at Columbia University, a judicious consultant to the Library of Congress, a judge for the Yale Series of Younger Poets, and an august presence behind such institutions as the Academy of American Poets, the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, and Poets House, a literary center and poetry library in New York. Most extraordinary of all, the Kunitz of the past forty years has been a measurably finer poet than he was in the first half of his life, amassing a body of such starkly powerful lyric poems as to make all that came before them seem an extended apprenticeship. They are, in all their outward simplicity and inward mystery, perhaps the closest that American poetry has come in our time to achieving an urgency and aura that deserve—even demand—to be called visionary.

It is a metamorphosis that has invited deeper wonder with each successive collection of Kunitz's poems, and never so irresistibly as with *Passing Through*, released in November to coincide with the poet's ninetieth birthday and promptly garlanded with the National Book Award. Here, in a trim volume that nobody could wish shorter, is virtually the entire windfall of Kunitz's "later" poetry: the selected contents of *The Testing-Tree* (1971), "The Layers" (the constellation of new poems that led off his 1979 edition of *The Poems of Stanley Kunitz*), and *Next-to-Last Things: New Poems and Essays* (1985), along with nine poems appearing for the first time in a book. Not a lifetime's work but something more seasoned and concentrated and surpassing—work with a lifetime steeped in it. In contrast to *The Poems of Stanley Kunitz*, a more substantial compilation that showed Kunitz over a span of some fifty years moving beyond his clenched and seething early style, *Passing Through* allows readers to follow the clean arc of Kunitz's late three decades of composition in splendid isolation.

It is, above all, a book of revelations. From the beginning Kunitz's was a poetry consecrated to transfiguring moments of insight and rapture, and it is startling to discover how active that core of exaltation has remained. For Kunitz, as for no other first-rank American poet of his time who comes readily to mind, the lyric poem has been a portal into mystical apprehension, an article of faith that he does not shrink from making explicit in the preface to *Passing Through*, "Instead of a Foreword." Conceding nothing to postmodern anxiety and exhaustion, Kunitz uses his prologue to extol the poet's vocation, as "a form of spiritual testimony," and poetry as "ultimately mythology, the telling of the stories of the soul." Most contemporary poets will squirm before this unre-

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constructed Keatsian language, preferring to tender their claims in the clipped lingua franca of professional shoptalk, but Kunitz will have none of that. "If we want to know what it felt like to be alive at any given moment in the long odyssey of the race," he avows, "it is to poetry we must turn."

Taken alone, such dictums might sound faintly schoolmarmish. And they would seem to be the very sort of didactic propositions that could all too easily fog a poet's wits. But in Kunitz's case quite the opposite effect has come to pass: hewing to the old high road of Romantic soul-making has steeled and steadied him, made him infinitely lighter on his feet. His "later" poetry does not break with the elevated designs of his earlier work; it's a purified, fire-tempered variant of it, and all the more uncompromising for being more colloquially accessible, more sparse and parsed, more transparent in its drift and import. The younger Kunitz often wound line and image and allusion so tightly that his stanzas seemed to be fighting for oxygen, their wrought-up prosody grimly mirroring the contortions of a poet groping after blinding illuminations. The older Kunitz has not relaxed his grip, but no longer does he strain after effects. Listen, for example, to this fragment: "If in my sleep / The ape, the serpent, and the fox I find / Shut with my soul in fortune's writhing sack, / I tame them with the sections of my mind / And teach my mind to love its thoughtless crack." And now to this: "The word I spoke in anger / weighs less than a parsley seed, / but a road runs through it / that leads to my grave."

The roughly half a century that stands between the first fragment, from "Beyond Reason," and the second, from "The Quarrel," scarcely seems an adequate index of the developmental light-years that divide them. Kunitz is by no stretch the only poet of consequence to undertake a revolution from within at mid-career, but not many have done so with anywhere near the same force of conviction. As if determining to stalk the numinous with finer snares and stealthier measures, Kunitz has taken pains to unpack his syntax, to hone a compact two- or three-beat line, to shape his poems with idiomatic economy and modesty. Still, no technical appraisal can quite take account of all Kunitz had to cast aside and shear away to find his way to flaying cadences such as these: "In a murderous time / the heart breaks and breaks / and lives by breaking. / It is necessary to go / through dark and deeper dark / and not to turn."

This passage belongs to the closing sequence of "The Testing-Tree," the title poem of the 1971 collection that unveiled the spare, lean manner of Kunitz's later years. Here are the acoustics and poetics—simple indicative speech tending toward the condition of scripture and parable, a tenor at once rhapsodic and intimate, a terse strain of self-reckoning—Kunitz has hammered into his own unmistakable register of sound and sense. Let *Passing Through* fall open at random and you cannot but marvel at this poet's sureness of touch and tempo: like the dragonfly he describes in "The Catch," a Kunitz poem, one often feels, might best be thought of as a "delicate engine / fired by impulse and glitter, / . . . less image than thought, and the thought come alive." And it's precisely that immediacy that gives this poetry its visionary authenticity: no matter how far he ranges into the realm of the unconscious or how deeply he dwells on signs and portents, there is nothing ethereal about Kunitz's habits of mind. Even at their most surreal and allegorical (as in "King of the River," which sends its totem salmon hurtling toward "the threshold / of the last mystery / at the brute absolute hour," or "The Knot," where the poet fixates on a lintel's "Obstinate bud / sticky with life / mad for the rain again") Kunitz's poems seem grounded and exacting in a way that lyrics designed to orchestrate shuddering epiphanies seldom are. Time and again they take—in a phrase out of Keats's letters which Kunitz has acknowledged as one of his touchstones—"but three steps from feathers to iron." On occasion, as in "An Old Cracked Tune," they move with the harrowing lilt of a song out of Blake:

> My name is Solomon Levi,
> the desert is my home,
> my mother's breast was thorny,
> and father I had none.
>
> The sands whispered, *Be separate*,
> the stones taught me, *Be hard.*
> I dance, for the joy of surviving,
> on the edge of the road.

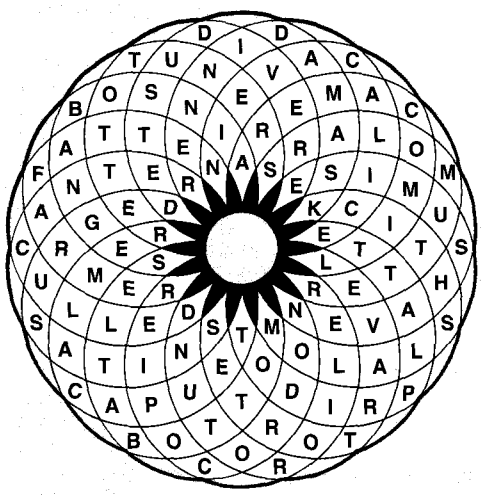
EVEN for poets nowhere near Kunitz's age, a volume of selected poems is usually, in one studied way or another, the formal unveiling of a monument, a hopeful brief for literary posterity. But no such ceremony intrudes on *Passing Through*: even in its closing pages, where the latest of these later poems appear, Kunitz doesn't once seem to be posing for a marble bust or auditioning for the anthologies. Instead one enters the presence of an indomitable elder spirit writing with alertness, tenacity, and finesse, still immersed in the life of the senses and persisting in the search for fugitive essences. Neither resigned nor becalmed, Kunitz's newest poems are by turns contemplative, confiding, mythic, and elegiac. If they have the measured and worldly tone that befits an old master, they also have the ardent and questing air of one whose capacity for artless wonder seems inexhaustible. "What makes the engine go?" Kunitz asks in "Touch Me," as he kneels in his cricket-riddled garden and marvels "like a child again / . . . to hear so clear / and brave a music pour / from such a small machine." And the answering line speaks for the persistence of Kunitz's music as well: "Desire, desire, desire."

Perhaps the ultimate tribute to this book is to say that one closes it with no certainty that it's going to stand as the poet's last word. Little in these poems puts one in mind of postscripts or epitaphs, and even Kunitz's most pronounced valedictory gestures seem somehow to steal a march on the gloaming. Consider, for example, the closing lines of the book's title poem, which, its epigraph informs us, was composed on the poet's seventy-ninth birthday.

> The way I look
> at it, I'm passing through a phase:
> gradually I'm changing to a word.
> Whatever you choose to claim
> of me is always yours;
> nothing is truly mine
> except my name. I only
> borrowed this dust.

It should be noted that "Passing Through" is addressed to Kunitz's wife, Elise Asher; this is no last will and testament but a love poem. The whole effect is vintage Kunitz: lines unforced and seemingly spontaneous yet so ineffable that one can almost imagine them having been inscribed on papyrus. To write

ANSWERS TO THE MAY PUZZLER



"Flower Cuttings"

Letters deleted from clues spell "Flowers rise up in the midst of an old master." Letters deleted from entries spell the answer HA(REBEL)LS. 1. DA + MASK (*ad* rev.); DU(STE)D (*set* anag.) 2. CH + ALICE; DIN + NER (*ren* rev.) 3. CA(VE)IN; C(OMIT)AL 4. MU(T)TER; CAME + RA 5. M(OL)ARS; S + HAVEN 6. S(LAL)OM (*all* anag.); SU(RM + IS)E 7. S(H)TICK; PER + IDOT 8. P + LATTE; TO(R)TES 9. T + RAVEL; R(O)TUND (*turnd* anag.) 10. COP(I)ER; BR + OILER (*rb* rev.) 11. COR(DO)N; BE AT + LES 12. CALMER (anag.); BO(T + T)OM 13. S + URGED; CAPU + LET 14. SAT + INS; CANTER (anag.) 15. F(AT + T)EN; CU + L + LED 16. BOSNIA (anag.); F(ARM)ER 17. BANG(LE)S; TUNERS (anag.) 18. DIVER + SE; TOTTER (pun)

this calmly and collectedly, with a sanity so finely tempered that it acquires a spooky prescience, one has to have done more than simply endure. And such is clearly the story behind the exemplary resilience of grand old man Stanley Kunitz: the fullness of time hasn't just left his senses intact but has concentrated his mind wonderfully. That dust has moved mountains.

All Politics Is Cosmic

by Lee Siegel

THE POLITICS OF MEANING

by Michael Lerner. Addison-Wesley, 355 pages, $24.00.

IN the beginning there was a hunger for vision. And then came a great need for rhetoric. Soon President and Mrs. Clinton sensed representative vibrations in the quasi-mystical-socio-politico-psychological coat of crazy colors that the author and activist Michael Lerner calls the "politics of meaning." They must have felt that Lerner, with his talk of a universal inner pain and "hunger" for connection, might help them administer verbal balm to an America collectively turning inward amid social and economic disruptions. So, shortly into their reign, the Clintons summoned Lerner to Washington, thereby setting in motion Lerner's own inward-turning fall.

Lerner had come sprawling onto the public scene in 1986 with his magazine *Tikkun*. A licensed psychotherapist, he had spent the previous ten years in Oakland, California, treating patients at a clinic he co-founded called the Institute for Labor and Mental Health. (Lerner has claimed that his vision for America came to him through his encounters with patients.) But problems have beset *Tikkun* from the start. A former leader of Students for a Democratic Society and co-editor of the ultraleft magazine *Ramparts*, Lerner seemed to long for the old

confrontational days. He began to confront himself. He began to march on his own magazine.

At its best *Tikkun* has tried to speak with a nonpartisan voice of common decency, outside the crumbling framework of left-right antitheses. But for Lerner, all politics is cosmic. And in his own offerings in the magazine, for page after page he has spluttered on like an old Volkswagen about "pain" and "healing," "misrecognition" of our true selves and "healing," "surplus powerlessness" and "healing," "healing" and . . . well, "healing."

Increasingly Lerner's writings have been careering toward strange destinations: A radical feminist perspective that called for strengthening the family. An attack on selfishness that talked only about the self. An emphasis on "personal responsibility" which proclaimed that every individual has been crippled by an unfeeling world. A version of Judaism as a revolutionary religion which was to historical Judaism what a macaroon is to a Passover seder.

OUT of the wilderness, then, where he had wandered through the sands of psychotherapy for two decades after the New Left's self-destruction, Lerner bounded hopefully toward 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. This faux-Hasidic evangelical, this erstwhile Gramscian revolutionary, this former leader of SDS, sat musing and advising in the White House: a scene almost too beautiful to be true. For the first time since the 1960s a member of the New Left had a President's ear, albeit by way of the commanding attention of the First Lady. (And if Lerner had been a disciple of Talleyrand instead of Gramsci . . . ? The irreverent mind boggles.) Most interesting, Lerner had not had to revise himself rightward to pass into the halls of power. He had had only to dust off a radical disdain for a liberal welfare state's concessions to the status quo. Then he threw over this old scorn the cloak of a flourishing centrist impatience with liberal policy.

In a speech she made about health care in April of 1993, Hillary Clinton dropped the phrase "politics of meaning." Meanwhile, Lerner in his magazine was fawningly touting Clinton and his own association with the President, complete with a reproduction of a memo that Clinton as governor of Arkansas had sent Lerner, thanking him for "clarifying" some important issues. The press swarmed all over Lerner. *The New York Times Magazine* ran a corrosive article about him titled "This Year's Prophet" a month after running an article that derided the warm reception Hillary Clinton had extended to some of Lerner's zanier notions.

As a focal point for ideas—universal health insurance, an emphasis on rebuilding the institutions of civil society, a publicly responsible journalism—*Tikkun* at its best never deserved the mostly shallow media trouncing it got when the First Lady made Lerner's phrase famous. But its best began to come less and less often. Lerner's grip on the magazine was reducing it to inanity. And his publicity-hungry maneuverings earned him whatever vituperation he received.

But fatal for Lerner, the Clintons' instincts about his usefulness proved monumentally wrong. The "politics of meaning" came down, in the practical political sense, to changing the reigning cultural "paradigms." "Caring" and "healing" meant sensitivity to the pain of every faint heart in every narrowing form of group self-interest. Thus in a country where more and more people were either losing their jobs or worried about losing their jobs, the question of homosexuals in the military became paramount. And what began to seem like feminism's devolution into a mission of further empowering upper-middle-class women, carried forward in the symbolic presence of the First Lady, topped the national agenda.

In November of 1994 some pundits strained to understand why the beleaguered working class and the anxious middle class voted for candidates who would only preserve a beleaguering and anxiety-producing status quo. The reason is simple. In contemporary America's whirling culture, promises of stability amount to promises of change. And the meaning-oriented Clintons, partly inspired by Lerner's loony visions of a brave new consciousness, promised only to hasten the pace of flux.

IN the 1970s the New Left got into the consciousness-changing business in a big way and made itself extinct. Courage, faith, hard work, and eventual legislation, not a new cultural hegemony, had

changed the lot of black people in the South. Determined exposure of the truth, expressions of solidarity, and appeals to American decency, not a transformation of the American mind, had helped to end the war in Vietnam. But Lerner never really left the ruined precincts of the theoretical left. He simply translated "bourgeois hegemony" into "the pain" and the "misrecognition" of our true selves that he believes deform all our lives.

In *The Politics of Meaning*, Lerner writes, "There is no one who is not *also* a victim, no one who has not been spiritually and emotionally negated as a child." Such pain creates the "selfishness paradigm" that rules our society. Healing this pain is "the condition for the fulfillment of our needs for meaning," for "the consciousness necessary for building a very different kind of society." And this consciousness is the "condition for the liberation of our entire society from a materialist and individualist ethos." There is not much difference between those belligerently vapid statements and the vapidly belligerent declaration Lerner made twenty-three years ago, in *The New Socialist Revolution: An Introduction to Its Theory and Strategy* (a book that doesn't appear on his list of publications): "The first task of the revolutionary movement . . . is to destroy bourgeois hegemony and develop a radical consciousness among each of the potential constituencies for revolutionary action."

Brother, can you spare a paradigm? The cant term appears over and over in Lerner's writings, and in this book. It is one of the contemporary left's most precious conceptual amulets. (It has also been adapted by everyone from advisers in the Bush White House to business strategists.) Thomas Kuhn introduced the concept in his *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), to explain how scientific knowledge proceeds by upheaval. The theories of Copernicus, Newton, and Einstein, Kuhn wrote, are all self-contained and discontinuous from one another. There is no steady accumulation of truth in the form of objective knowledge about the physical universe. Instead each theory is a "revolutionary" break from the previous theory, resulting in the arbitrary replacement of one "paradigm" of knowledge by another. Once the paradigm of knowledge in a given period changes, the way science is done

Congratulations to the

WINNER

of

The Atlantic Monthly

Annual Puzzler Contest

ELENA REYES

The answer to the April Puzzler was "It still won't open. Get a hacksaw."

The winner of the second *Atlantic Monthly* Annual Puzzler Contest has been awarded a $150 gift certificate from Zingerman's, in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where one can order from a huge selection of gourmet treats. Zingerman's is often singled out in Corby Kummer's food columns as a source for rare, high-quality ingredients. Watch for the third Annual Puzzler Contest in our April, 1997, issue. Thank you to all the people who entered this year's contest.

and applied is completely transformed.

Having migrated to the universities, the New Left cadres seized on Kuhn's idea; they turned Marx on his head. Marx had argued that material conditions create consciousness; the new theoreticians would have none of it. They held that rather than changing material conditions in order to change social attitudes, it is necessary to engineer new social attitudes—new paradigms of social knowledge—in order to transform material conditions.

This left, however, so infatuated with the impersonal processes of hard science, ignored a significant absence in Kuhn's book. Kuhn applied his idea of paradigm upheavals to the physical sciences but not to the biological sciences. Knowledge about the circulatory system, for example, from the Renaissance through the nineteenth century to today, has been more cumulative than in the physical sciences: there are abiding truths about the operation and treatment of the human heart.

So, typically, the theoretical left chose the wrong scientific analogy. If it hadn't, it might have stressed—as the young Marx, along with social democrats and liberals, did—the relationship between human dignity and the fulfillment of material needs. For there is nothing so transforming as the certainty of a prosperous human future growing out of decent employment and guarantees of life's basic necessities. That is where Marx's early humanism meets life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Meaning and caring and empathy for the Other often flow from those simple material premises—perhaps even a lifting of the ban on gays in the military. Yet the contemporary left has steered liberalism toward the inherently snobbish psychologization of materialism—let them eat consciousness!—whose desiccated fruits are political correctness and the "politics of meaning." It was in part such an abstract contempt for ordinary experience that led the social-democratic thinker Michael Harrington to walk out of the 1962 SDS summit at Port Huron in disgust. The same abstract contempt has helped to disable American liberalism. Yet in *The Politics of Meaning*, Lerner recommends that courses be given throughout public high school in "the history of domination of consciousness." Lerner never learns.

THE press attacked Lerner (and also gave him forum after forum), the Clintons dropped him, and the press forgot him. Out of that humiliated sensibility comes *The Politics of Meaning*.

There is not much to say about this sad book, an unreadable compendium of gaseous bromides that Lerner has been repeating for ten years. The overall effect is of an oversized, appallingly written and conceived brochure for a socio-politico-cosmic vacation.

> Instead of thinking of a politics-of-meaning society as one in which people are going to be excessively focussed on wondering about their duty, we can picture it as one in which people will be so excited to be meeting one other and having the opportunity to spend time together that we will resemble playful puppies, joyfully exploring and celebrating each other's existence.

> Another dignity-restoring mechanism would be to encourage residents of nursing homes to hold memorial services for residents who have passed away.

> If [children] are emotionally or physically brutalized . . . we are all likely to suffer the consequences—whether in random acts of violence or in ethically insensitive voting behavior.

> Indeed, we might eventually ask whether there really is such a thing as "the physical world," or whether that concept itself is merely an attempt to abstract reality from its essential spiritual, ethical, and material interconnectedness.

> Men are often so alienated from their own bodies that many have no idea how much more delicious and stimulating a meaning-based sexuality can be.

As his public fortunes have fallen, Lerner has disappeared into his own ego. He is doing the work of Onan, not Moses.

GIVEN his mental convolutions, it's impossible to resist applying Lerner's cherished psychologizing to Lerner himself. An analysis would go like this. The people Lerner "treated" at his Institute for Labor and Mental Health were working-class and middle-class. That is, they were members of the "silent majority" who had once rejected Lerner's calls

for revolutionary action. So for two decades Lerner got back his own. His patients might reasonably have thought he was trying to help them; but Lerner had another agenda. He tells us that his "aim was to better understand the psychodynamics of middle-income working people, and also to try to understand why so many of them were moving to the political Right." And the findings of his research with the people who put themselves in his care were that they had been deformed by pain and misrecognition, maimed by the "deprivation of meaning." In other words, it was *their fault* that the revolution had failed and propelled Lerner into twenty years of oblivion, not his. *They* had failed *him*. This project of self-vindication has been at the "meaning" core of his ambitions since before Lerner was seduced and then abandoned by the Clintons and lost the media spotlight. Now, as an indifferent society once again rejects Lerner's calls for transformation, the self-vindication remains.

Let all this infuriated healing come to an end.

BRIEF REVIEWS

Robert Frost

by Jeffrey Meyers. Houghton Mifflin/Peter Davison, 424 pages, $30.00.

Frost was in his sixties and widely regarded as the finest American poet of his time when he appointed Lawrance Thompson his official biographer. This was in 1939, and for more than twenty years Thompson tagged after his peripatetic and seemingly indestructible subject, becoming, in his own opinion, a semi-slave to Frost. He came to hate his master. The eventual biography, which Thompson did not live to complete, represented Frost as a self-promoting egomaniac, a psychological sadist, a monster. It omitted Frost's long love affair with Kay Morrison, who, as the poet's major heir, had a whip hand over any biographer. It omitted a great deal, in fact—including at least half of Frost. Mr. Meyers's widely researched, briskly written, and altogether admirable biography corrects that distorted portrait. The author provides new facts, useful sketches of the many people Frost dealt with, a sympathetic but not idolatrous view of Frost's character and actions, and an astute if sometimes overanalytical interpretation of his poetry. (Mr. Meyers can see a derivation anywhere, and likes them all.) Frost was neither saint nor villain nor rustic sage—merely a poet who, in President John F. Kennedy's words, "brought an unsparing instinct for reality to bear on the platitudes and pieties of society," and, miraculously, persuaded society to love it. Mr. Meyers's biography is a fine corrective both to Thompson's spite and to a certain amount of sentimental guff from other sources.

Sandra Nichols Found Dead

by George V. Higgins. Holt/John Macrae, 241 pages, $23.00.

Jerry Kennedy, Mr. Higgins's rasp-tongued criminal-defense lawyer, reappears to good effect in a novel that does not involve his specialty. The dispute is over that standard New England matter—inherited money. The interest of the tale lies in the characters, who, like all the author's people, talk amusingly and at length in what amount to set pieces on foolish laws, spoiled rich brats, press irresponsibility, and their own seedy histories. There is a fine section on how to entice an impatient millionaire into an extravagant deal, and a sickeningly graphic

description of what the police encounter in extracting a long-dead body from a bog. Through all this lively, acid eloquence the reader comes to realize that Jerry has been assigned to help the police and the court, normally his enemies, arrange a bit of legal blackmail. The ironic alliance makes for intriguing reading.

False Impressions: The Hunt for Big-Time Art Fakes

by Thomas Hoving.
Simon & Schuster, 366 pages, $26.00.

Mr. Hoving, formerly the director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, writes entertainingly about art fakes, which, he declares, are as old as humanity. Both museum curators, who presumably should know better, and private collectors have been soundly stung, and "Three words tell the whole story: *need*, *speed*, and *greed*." Mr. Hoving, who admits to having been stung himself on occasion, tells alarming and sometimes absurd stories of such enormous frauds as the Metropolitan's Etruscan warrior. He offers some advice on detecting frauds—which is not likely to help an amateur enthusiast—and a warning that "the art world we are living in today is a new, highly active, unprincipled one of art fakery." It seems that the only safe purchase is a contemporary piece straight from the hands of a living artist. Mr. Hoving has no examples of an artist's faking himself.

Speak Low (When You Speak Love): The Letters of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya

edited and translated by Lys Symonette and Kim H. Kowalke.
University of California, 632 pages, $39.95.

Except at the start of their affair, when he became effusively emotional, Weill and Lenya did not write the kind of love letters that bore anyone but the lovers themselves. The composer and the singing actress were artistic partners, concerned with each other's work, with getting their property out of Hitler's Reich, and finally with establishing themselves in the United States—but the work always came first. The correspondence is gossipy and often maliciously clever about colleagues, exasperated about failed projects, and in Lenya's case highly informative about the miseries endured by a road company playing one-night stands in the sticks. Weill's letters cause one to marvel that any musical show ever reaches completion, what with dramatist, lyricist, and composer all angling for top billing and top money. Weill was, of course, soon successful here with shows like *Lady in the Dark* and *One Touch of Venus*. Lenya, dependent on spoken language, was not, but her letters make no complaint about the disparity in their positions. Both enjoyed love affairs during their periods of separation, and both took it calmly, Weill once writing to Lenya, "I believe we're the only married couple without problems." They seem to have been less a married couple than a professional couple, friends who valued each other's talents above any sexual adventures. As one works through their well-annotated correspondence, they become very likable people.

St. Burl's Obituary

by Daniel Akst.
MacMurray & Beck, 270 pages, $22.95.

Mr. Akst's novel starts with a provocative problem: how does a spectacularly obese man disappear? Burleigh Bennett, an obituary writer for a New York newspaper, lumbers out for a late dinner at the restaurant he has inherited and walks into a gangland execution. Unfortunately, he gets a good face-to-face look at the hit man. It becomes advisable to vanish. His adventures on the run are grotesque, elaborately gastronomic, and ultimately disappointing—at least for the reader. After all the ingeniously contrived to-do, one expects something more than a picnic in a graveyard.

Bebop and Nothingness: Jazz and Pop at the End of the Century

by Francis Davis.
Simon & Schuster Macmillan/Schirmer, 315 pages, $25.00.

A number of the essays in this collection first appeared in *The Atlantic*.

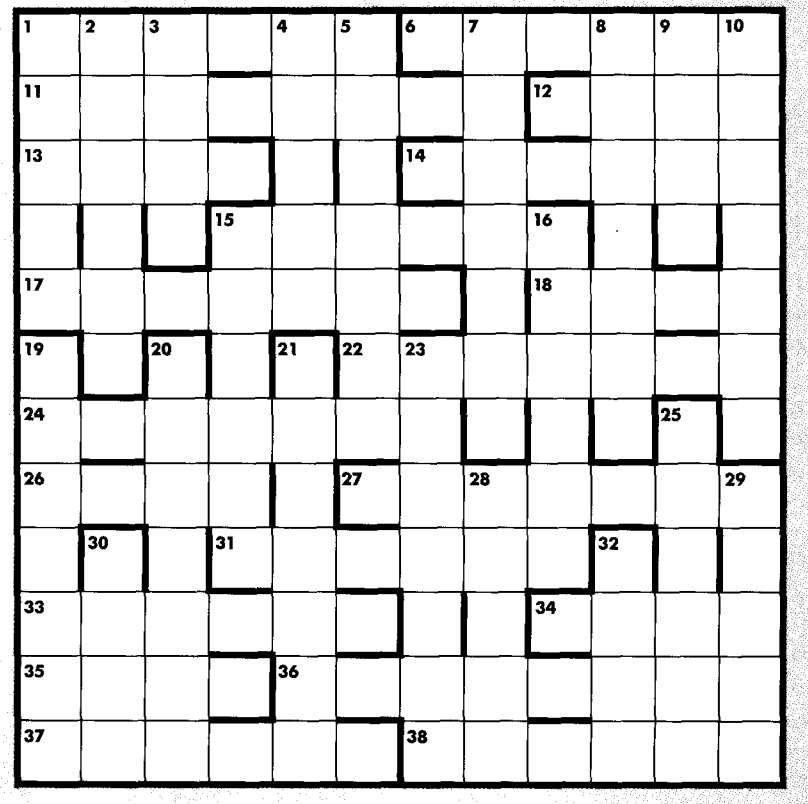
—Phoebe-Lou Adams

THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

"Give Us a Break!"

The words quoted above were E-mailed to us recently by a solver who claimed to find our themes and gimmicks too cryptic. To pacify this correspondent, we hereby heed the titular plea. Diagram entries in this puzzle undergo no manipulation of any sort; the puzzle is effectively themeless, although the clues may seem 6, 24, 27, 34, 4, 17, 12, 25, 28 (a two-word phrase spelled by the letters in those nine diagram squares). Answers include three proper nouns.



The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 120.

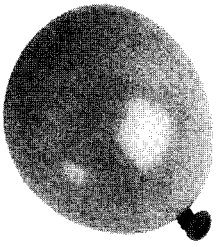
Across

1. Be very thin, get in a company of dancers (6)
6. Dish one's tart, if ice's covering royal splits (6)
11. Inclination in a mood to make Ma clean (8)
12. A mixed group spreads aid (4)
13. No trap I'd left among swine (4)
14. S.A. usage, in Islamabad (6)
15. One gin swamps shams (6)
17. Di's figures, since splitting GOP's foes (7)
18. Name each inn ovation (4)
22. Austria's first thin king is inducing smiles (7)
24. Offish private eye's motion picture (7)
26. One debauched rascal with gout (4)
27. Rabbi tears bill penned by Freud (7)
31. Heroine said backward wit held 'er (6)
33. Naked person I shell in buff (6)
34. China by small yacht (4)
35. Huey, after school exam (4)
36. Gaining pound, special monk eying a round berry (8)
37. Shakespeare to get a remedy for the cold shoulder? (6)
38. Bit of sleet farther away is just ice (6)

Down

1. Found Ed's sack full of arsenic (5)
2. To get her cap on, Elie initially ducked (6)
3. Attached at the end of lifeline (4)
4. Redskins' first quarterback has the number? (5)
5. Charge in, containing mad river (7)
7. Queen entering with Roman-style bra, in case (7)
8. A young male clam or a kid in a tale (7)
9. A perm one encountered cut short (4)
10. Herb keeps Sal addressing material on the farm (7)
15. Dr. Ives favoring those in Paris (6)
16. Spot, red, covering skin (6)
19. Water flows quietly into sloops (7)
20. A part of a star turned fiery (7)
21. Ape saw pineapple (7)
23. Million aliens want only help? (7)
25. Uncle daftly embracing Auntie (6)
28. Miss Pelt roots in trunk (5)
29. Now in Raleigh, convert (5)
30. Leer upset backpacking virgin (4)
32. Red raft with tiny specimen (4)

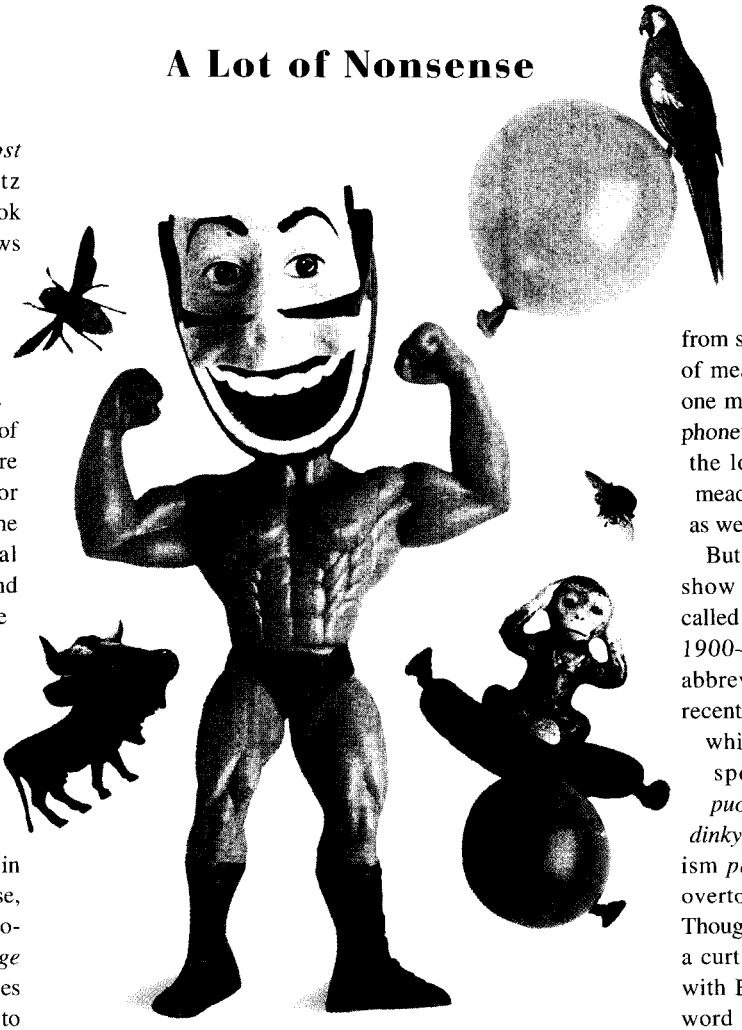
Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.



WORD IMPROVISATION

by J. E. Lighter

A Lot of Nonsense



Investigations of slang by the editor of the Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang

WHEN the *Washington Post* media reporter Howard Kurtz needed a title for his recent book on daytime-television talk shows (which epitomize, in his view, America's increasingly "run-at-the-mouth culture"), a term suggesting a conflation of airwaves and vaporous blather was ready to hand: *Hot Air*. One rule of thumb about slang is that the more prevalent the object, activity, or behavior being described, and the more intense its psychological salience, the more numerous and diverse the slang terms available to describe it. The demand for slang denoting nonsense—or, if you will, *applesauce, hogwash, hokum, hooey, jive, piffle, tommyrot,* or *twaddle*—stems from the fact that people talk so much of it.

The first reference to *hot air*, in the sense of boasting or nonsense, that is cited in historical dictionaries comes from *The Gilded Age* (1873), by Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner. The book refers to "the hot air of the capital"—but although the association of *hot air* and Washington seems fitting, it is not clear that Twain and Warner meant to do anything other than refer to the temperature of the atmosphere. (The text is ambiguous.) The first unequivocal citation comes from the humorist George Ade's *Fables in Slang* (1900): "He talked what is technically known as Hot Air." By century's end, then, the slang meaning was well established, as was the derivative term *balloon juice* (at least at Yale)—no doubt helped along by the pneumatic ancestors *gas* and *wind*. *Gas* was coined in its literal sense by the seventeenth-century Dutch chemist J. B. van Helmont, who derived it from the Greek word *khaos*, meaning, well, "chaos." The slang meaning had developed in English by the late 1700s, and in the nineteenth century *gas* was without question a popular word for "empty talk." *Wind* led to *windies*, which in the American Southwest referred to tall tales. *Windbags* and *gasbags*, of course, are found all over.

If one major class of nonsense-related slang derives, naturally enough, from the gaseous language of breath and speech, another derives from the world of organic liquids and solids of dubious value. In the early seventeenth century *balderdash* was a mixture of liquors (or even of beer and buttermilk)—beneath the notice of serious tipplers. Restoration writers eventually applied the word to worthless rhetoric. *Baloney* made a similar transition by 1922, after six decades as simply the name of an inexpensive sausage made from some of the least choice cuts of meat. For emphasis nowadays one may say *bull-oney*, creating a phonetic and psychological link to the long-popular *bull*, and to a meadowful of metaphors we may as well skip here.

But not entirely. Old yearbooks show that cadets at West Point called voluble talk *B.S.* as early as 1900—evidently a transparent abbreviation even then. A more recent euphemism is *bull hockey*, which has nothing to do with sports; newer still are *bull puckey* and the mysterious *bull dinky*. The dismissive Americanism *poppycock* has scatological overtones in the original Dutch. Though Americans today associate a curt outburst of *"Poppycock!"* with English gentry, in truth the word was once unfathomable in England; Rudyard Kipling, when recounting for English readers in 1891 a conversation he had had in California, felt the need to substitute the word *bosh*. The origins of the recent British favorite *codswallop* remain in dispute.

Henry Ford told a reporter in 1916, "History is more or less *bunk*"—short for *buncombe*, often applied to insincere political speech. (This word is associated with Buncombe County, in North Carolina, and an incident in which Felix Walker, an early-nineteenth-century politician from that district, droned on and on in Congress despite entreaties from his colleagues, insisting that he was speaking "for Buncombe.") Ford, with his offhand remark, presaged the ahistoricism of much contemporary cultural theory—which itself may contain no small degree of *malarkey* (origin unknown).

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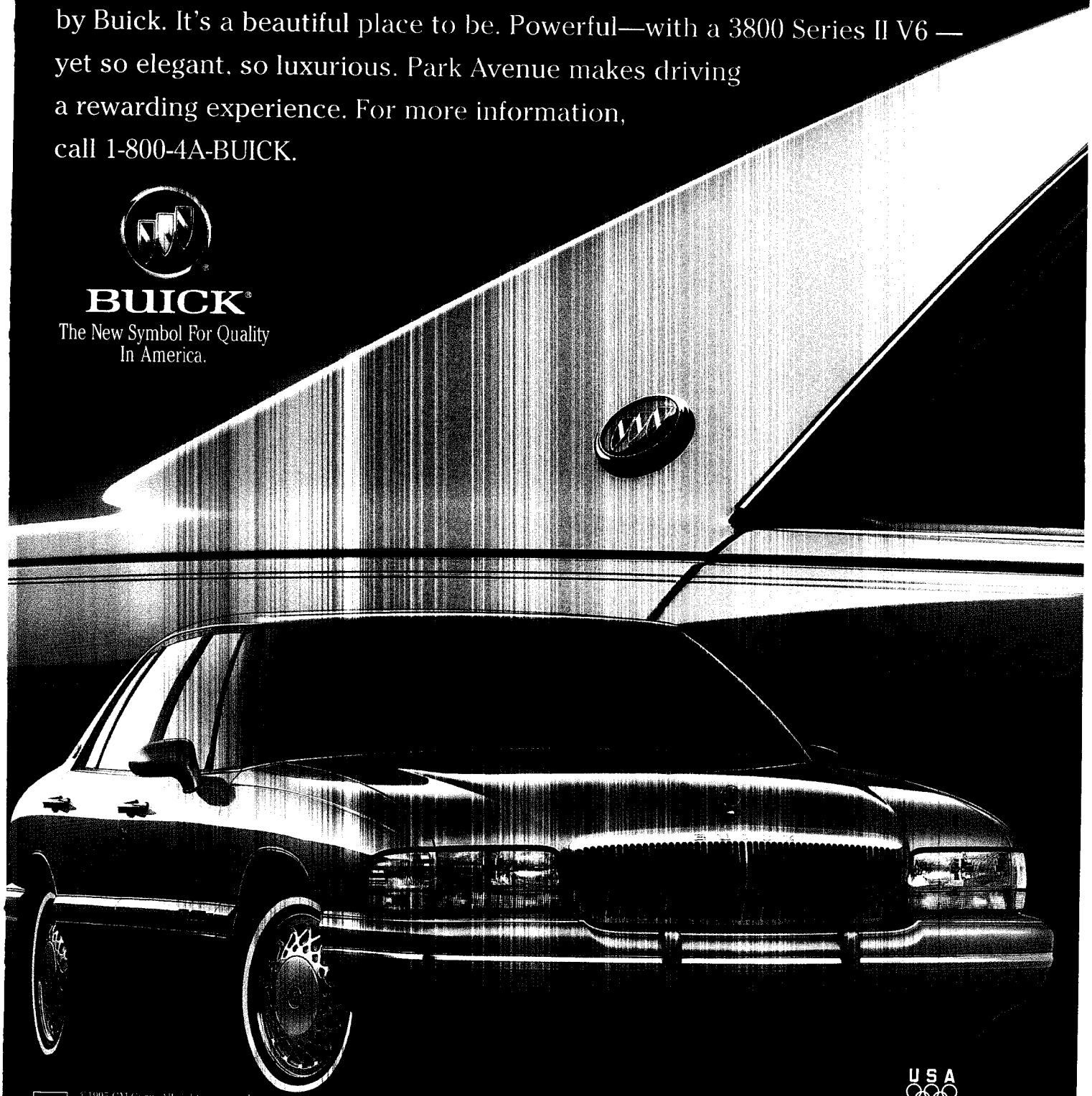

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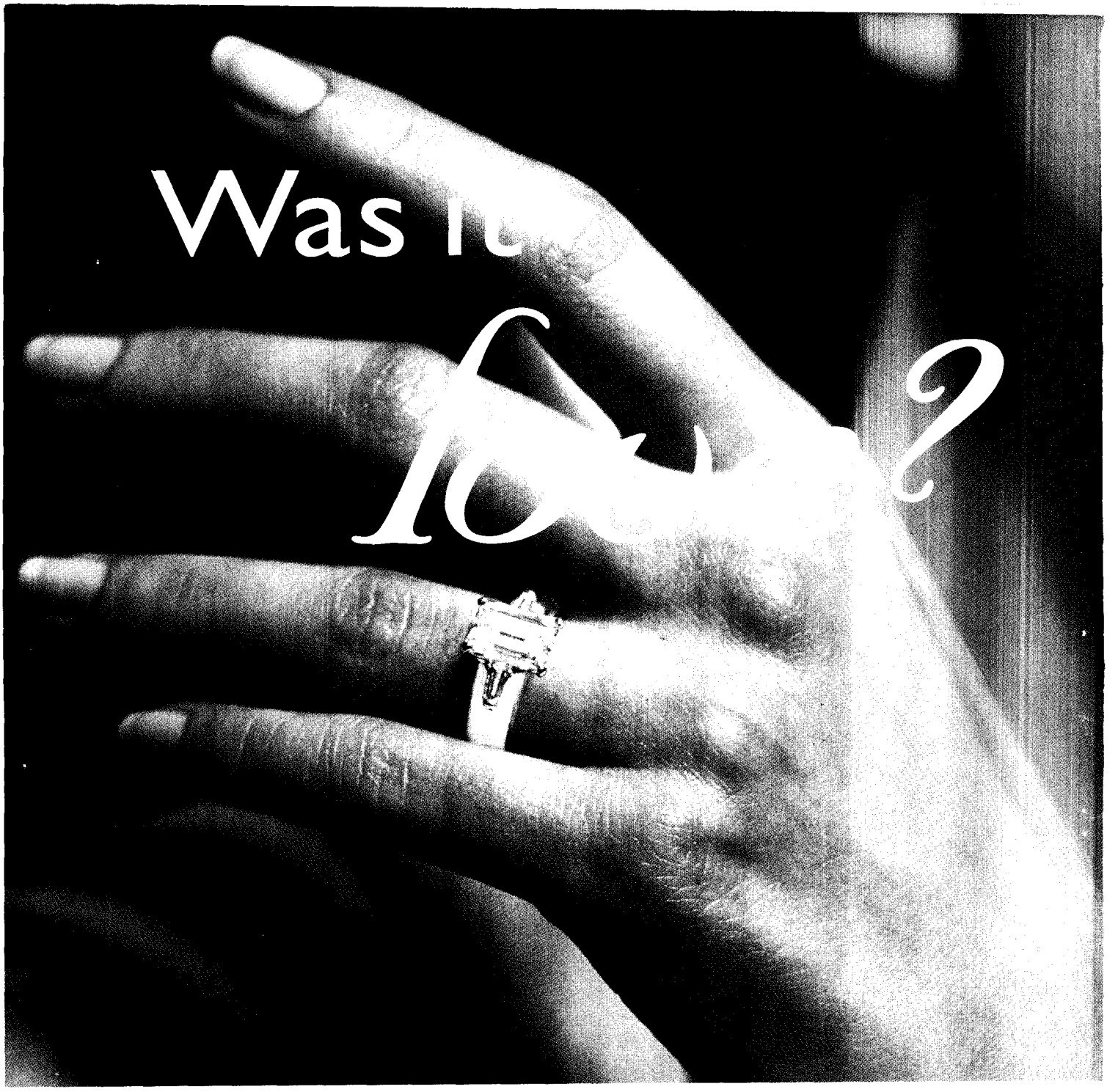

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